

STUDENT LEADER GUIDE



THE CONVERSATION: OPPORTUNITY WEEK

ENEMIES

WELCOME & OPEN PRAYER

[Host] Hey everyone! Welcome to First Priority. We're so glad you're here. Today [insert name] is going to talk about something that's honestly not easy. How we should love and even greet our enemies. Yes, you heard that right. Because that's exactly what Jesus did, and if anyone gets how hard that can be, it's Him. Before we jump in, let's take a second to pray and ask God to help us open up and really hear what He wants to say to us today. Let's pray.

Sample prayer: God, thank You for bringing us here today. We know this topic isn't easy. Loving our enemies doesn't come naturally. But You did it first, and we want to follow Your lead. Help us be open, not just to hear Your truth, but to actually live it out. Give us the courage to love the people we'd rather avoid, and the strength to reflect You in how we treat others. Speak to us today and change our hearts. In Jesus' name, amen.

THE CONVERSATION

[Speaker] Hey everyone! Last week we kicked off this whole series talking about something that's not always easy — loving our enemies. We looked at how Jesus calls us to pray for the people who hurt us, ignore us, or don't like us. That's hard, but we're not doing it alone. We have the Holy Spirit helping us, and we're using our TAKE 5 cards to intentionally pray for those people each day. Would anyone like to share how praying for those on their card is going? (Take a moment to let a few people share and share your own response too.)

So now what? Is praying enough?

This week we're taking it a step further and it might feel more awkward than when we pray in private. We're talking about greeting our enemies. Yes, saying hi to them. Showing kindness. Going out of our way to treat them like people who matter. Because they do.

Let's read what Jesus says in Matthew chapter 5 verses 46 and 47. *"For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?"* OUCH! Jesus is calling it out here. He's basically saying, "Big deal if you're kind to your best friends. Literally everyone does that." That kind of love doesn't stand out. It doesn't reflect His kind of love. But when we go out of our way to be kind to people who have been unkind to us, that's next level. That's what Jesus would do!

Let's think about this. Who do we usually say hi to in the halls or in the cafeteria? Just our friends? Our teammates? Our crew? Jesus is saying that even something as simple as a "what's up" or "how's it going?" to someone we normally avoid is a form of love. It's powerful, especially when they don't expect it.

So, what does it look like to greet our enemies?

- When they walk into a room, we go up to them first. Let them know we see them. Let them feel like they belong.
- Celebrate their wins. If they get picked for something, score a goal, or do something awesome, cheer for them. Even if part of us doesn't want to.
- Sit with them. Invite them over. Or if they're sitting alone, go to them. This might be the hardest one, but it's one of the most meaningful.

This kind of stuff is what Jesus meant when He told us to be light in a dark world in Philippians chapter 2 verse 15, *"that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."* When we are willing to have awkward moments by being kind to people we have been avoiding,

we're showing that Jesus lives in us. That's what makes us different.

DISCUSSION TIME

[Speaker & Mentor] Let's take a few minutes to talk about this together. (Give students a chance to share their thoughts on the questions below and be sure to join the conversation.)

- Why do you think Jesus wants us to greet or show kindness to people who may not like us?
- Have you ever had someone you didn't like suddenly open up to you? What happened?
- What's one small step you can take this week to "greet" someone on your TAKE 5 card?

Thanks for being honest with your answers. These kinds of conversations matter, and they help us see people the way Jesus does. Let's keep thinking about how we can actually live this out at school this week, not just talk about it here but do something about it out there.

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

CHALLENGE & PRAY

[Host] Our challenge for this week is to pick one person from our TAKE 5 card and greet them. That could be saying hi in the hallway, sending a kind message, giving a compliment, or just being friendly when we usually keep walking. We never know, our one small step could open the door to a much bigger conversation later. Let's pray.

Sample prayer: God, You love us even when we mess up and You ask us to show that same love to others. Help us this week to be bold enough to notice the people we'd usually ignore. Give us the courage to smile, to speak, and to show kindness, even when it's awkward and hard. In Jesus' name, amen.

GAME TIME – Optional

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