

# STUDENT LEADER GUIDE



## THE CONVERSATION: ENCOUNTER WEEK

## OUTCASTS

### WELCOME & OPEN PRAYER

[Host] Hey everyone! Welcome to First Priority. We're really glad you're here. Today is extra special because [insert name] is going to talk about what it really means to start a relationship with Jesus. Let's take a moment to pray before we begin. Let's pray. (PRAY)

Sample prayer: God, thank You for today and for bringing each of us here. Help us to listen with open hearts and understand what You want to show us. Speak through [insert name] and give us the courage to respond. In Jesus' name, amen.

### GOSPEL MESSAGE

[Speaker] This month we've been learning that Jesus loves the outcasts and that we should too. But here's something to think about: we're not just talking about other people. At one point, we were all outcasts. Before we chose to follow Jesus, our lives were distant from God. And some of us might still feel that way. Like we're far from Him.

So, today let's talk about the Gospel, the Good News, and give everyone a chance to respond.

God loves us. Not just a little, but with a love that never stops or gives up. First John chapter 4 verses 9 and 10 say, *"God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins."*

Even though God loves us, we all have a problem: sin. Romans chapter 3 verse 23 says, *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* Sin isn't just about doing something wrong; it's a condition that affects every part of who we are. It's when we choose our way over God's way. Every lie, every selfish act, every time we ignore what's right, that's sin. And sin isn't just bad behavior; it's what separates us from a perfect

and holy God.

Romans chapter 5 verse 12 explains how sin got started: *"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned."* It began with one man, but it affects us all. Because of sin, we were spiritually dead, cut off from the relationship we were created to have with God. That's what makes us outcasts.

But here's the best part—there's hope. And His name is Jesus.

Jesus lived a perfect life. He never sinned. And then He died in our place. Romans chapter 5 verse 8 says, *"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* He didn't wait for us to clean up our lives. He loved us and died for us just as we were. Then He rose from the dead, proving He really is the Son of God and giving us the chance to be in a relationship with Him.

Jesus spent His time with people others looked down on. He saw value in people who felt worthless. He showed kindness to people who were used to being ignored. That's the heart of Jesus and He invites us to respond.

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 this week is to take what you heard today and share it with someone else. Maybe it's a friend who feels like an outcast. Maybe it's a family member. Ask God to show you who needs to hear the Gospel. Let's pray!

Sample prayer: God, thank You for sending Jesus to rescue us. Help those who made a decision today grow in their new faith. And help all of us share Your love and message with others. Give us boldness and compassion. In Jesus' name, amen.

### GAME TIME – Optional

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