

HOPE Cycle 4 – Why do we read the Bible?

Leadership Roles:

- A student opens in prayer
- A student leads an icebreaker, if time allows
- A student explains the purpose of First Priority [First Priority is a Christian group, but you do not have to be a Christian to attend]
- 1 or 2 students read the questions and verses out loud to the group
- 1 student reports attendance (and decisions) on the phone app
- A student closes in prayer

This Month's Topic:

The Bible was written over a period of approximately 1,500 years by several authors. Although we see it as one book, it is actually a collection of many books. In this cycle, we will talk about why it's important to read the Bible.

Memory Verse:

Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled." Romans 15:4

WEEK 1: HELP Week

1. The Bible is God's Word to us, helping us to know Him. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says: "All Scripture [what is written in the Bible] is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work" (NLT).

Question: What does it mean that the Bible is inspired by God?

2. Read 2 Samuel 22:31 - "As for God, his way is perfect: The LORD's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him.

Question: What do you think it means to "take refuge in God"? Why is this important?

3. Read Psalm 34: 8 - "Give the LORD a chance to show you how good He is. Great blessings belong to those who depend on him!" (ERV).

Question: Sometimes we question God's goodness, especially when bad things happen. When was a time when you questioned if God is truly good? Please explain the circumstances. If someone here today is struggling to know if God is good, what would you say to them?

4. Read Psalm 33:4 - "For the word of the LORD holds true, and we can trust everything he does." This verse tells us that we can trust God's word [the Bible] and everything He does.

Question: How does this verse help you today?

Challenge: Pray for a friend who needs to know Jesus.

WEEK 2: OVERCOME Week

Last week, we talked about how the Bible helps us to know God. This week, we will talk about how the Bible helps us to know God's will for our lives.

1. The Bible teaches us and instructs us on how to live. Read Psalm 119:105 - "Your word [the Bible] is like a lamp that guides my steps, a light that shows the path I should take."

Question: If a lamp guides your steps, then how does the Bible show you the path to take?

2. Read Proverbs 3:5-6 - "Trust in and rely confidently on the LORD with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. ⁶In all your ways know and acknowledge and recognize [the Lord], and He will make your paths straight and smooth [removing obstacles that block your way]."

Question: In this verse, what does it mean to "not rely on your own insight or understanding"? Do you usually acknowledge and recognize the Lord in all of your ways? Why or why not?

3. Are you struggling to know God's plan for your life? Explain.

4. Read Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Question: In this verse, the Lord is speaking directly to you when He says He has a plan for your life. Does this surprise you? Explain

5. Do you have a verse that you would like to share concerning God's plan?

Challenge: At the end of the meeting, gather in a circle and pray for each other.

Week 3: PREPARE Week

Please read the memory verse out loud [together]. Then, prepare for next week's meeting by following these steps. Ask at least one student to volunteer for each of these roles:

1. Share his or her faith story
2. Read the salvation prayer & invitation (see below)
3. Be greeters at the door
4. Hand out the response cards [on FP website under "Student" tab]
5. Report attendance for this week and next week
6. Be on the follow-up team (see below)
7. End the meeting in prayer

If you have time, here is a quick lesson for this week:

1. Read Psalm 32:8 - "The Lord says, 'I will teach you and guide you in the way you should live. I will watch over you and be your guide.'"

Question: How does the Lord "teach you and guide you"?

2. Read Romans 15:4 - "Such things were written in the Scriptures [Bible] long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled."

Question: How does this verse encourage you today?

Challenge: Invite at least two friends to next week's Engage Week meeting.

WEEK 4: ENGAGE Week

Use your faith story to **ENGAGE** your campus for Christ. Share the gospel message and invitation (SEE BELOW). Please remember to use the Response Cards [found on the First Priority website- firstprioritytampa.org], report attendance and decisions for Christ [on the phone app].

Challenge: Invite two friends to your youth group or church this week.

Gospel Message (to be read out loud to the group):

- Admit that you are a sinner. To sin means to make a bad choice out of selfish desires, and sin separates us from God because we are pursuing our own path aside from what God's perfect plan for us.
- Believe in Jesus and put your trust in Him. Christ's death on a cross was an act of selfless love. He took on the whole sins of humanity, making it possible for all people to be reunited with God.
- Confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. This means acknowledging that you want Him in your life. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." This means that we cannot be saved by being "good enough", but only through accepting Jesus as our Savior.

Invitation/Prayer (ask students to bow their heads):

If this message is speaking to you today, and you want to trust in Jesus as your Savior, then pray this simple prayer to yourself: Dear Lord, I have sinned and this has separated me from you because you are a Holy God. But, your Word says that Jesus died for me, and his grace is extended to me so that I can be forgiven. Today, I pray that you will come into my life and be my LORD, helping me to trust in you and live in a way that is pleasing to you. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Follow Up Plan:

Once you've shared the gospel and invitation, collect the student response cards (which can be downloaded from the First Priority website) and then follow these steps:

1. Student leaders commit to praying for and contacting any student who has made a decision for Christ and/or has questions.
2. When contacting these students, student leaders will:
 - Answer any questions they may have
 - Offer to pray for them
 - Invite them to the next week's HELP Week meeting
 - Invite them to your church, if they don't have one
3. Return all student response cards to the student leader or teacher (response cards or information on the cards must never be given to an outside adult or organization/church).