

H.O.P.E Cycle 5: A New Creation

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:

As we have learned in the last few months, our human nature is to be selfish and to seek our own desires. But, if we put our faith in Jesus, we are forgiven by God and our sin is wiped away. In this month's lesson, we will learn that our faith in Jesus makes us a new creation. We have the Holy Spirit living in us and this gives us the power to overcome our selfish desires and live for God.

Memory Verse: It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. Deuteronomy 13:4

Week One: HELP

A relationship with Jesus can give you a new life, and allow you to triumph over a difficult family background or difficult circumstances. The story of King Josiah shows us that even though his father, Amon, and grandfather, Manasseh, were evil kings, Josiah chose to follow God.

1) Read **2 Chronicles 33: 1-2**: Manasseh (Josiah's grandfather) was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. ²*He did evil in the eyes of the LORD*, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. And read **2 Chronicles 33: 21-22**: Amon (Josiah's father) was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. ²²*He did evil in the eyes of the LORD*, as his father Manasseh had done. Amon worshiped and offered sacrifices to all the idols Manasseh had made.

Question: If Josiah's father and grandfather "did evil in the eyes of the Lord", what kind of environment do you think Josiah grew up in [describe the possible circumstances, attitudes, behaviors]? In what ways do our families affect us [positively and negatively- give examples]?

2) Read **2 Chronicles 34:1-3**: Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. ²*He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight* and followed the example of his ancestor David. He did not turn away from doing what was right. ³During the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, Josiah began to seek the God. Then in the twelfth year he began to purify Judah and Jerusalem, destroying all the pagan shrines, the carved idols and cast images. And read **Deuteronomy 13:4**: It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. **Question:** How do you think Josiah found the strength and courage to follow God and to seek God's **HELP** to avoid the path that his father and grandfather took?

3) Are you or someone you know in a difficult family situation and in need of God's **HELP**? Talk with your group about how this topic has provided encouragement?

This Week's Challenge: Pray for two friends who need to know Jesus

Week Two: OVERCOME

Last week, we talked about King Josiah and, that even though his father and grandfather were Kings that did evil in the eyes of the Lord, he chose to follow God and not repeat the patterns of his ancestors.

1) Read **Isaiah 43:18-19**: Forget what happened in the past, and do not dwell on events from long ago. ¹⁹I am going to do something new. It is already happening. Don't you recognize it? I will clear a way in the desert. I will make rivers on dry land. And **2 Corinthians 5:17 (TLB)**: When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside [a new creation]. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!

Question: What does God promise to do if we follow him [what do we become]? What does becoming a "new creation" or a brand new person mean to you?

2) If we are a new creation, do we still struggle with temptation and selfishness? Why?

3) Read **Deuteronomy 13:4**: It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. **and Ephesians 5:1**: Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children. Question: What does God ask us to do in these verses? What areas in your life are you struggling to follow God instead of your own selfish desires?

4) What negative family or friend influences are you struggling with today [describe]? How do these Bible verses encourage you to **OVERCOME** these negative influences?

This Week's Challenge: At the end of the meeting, gather in a circle and pray for each other. If anyone is struggling with a negative influence in their life, this is a good time to include it in the prayer.

Week Three: PREPARE

In the last few weeks, we talked about how King Josiah triumphed over his evil heritage by following God. As the King, he pledged to follow God and helped those around him to do the same.

1) **Deuteronomy 6:5** says "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." In what ways can you show others your love for God by your words and actions? How will this influence them to have faith in God?

2) **Romans 15:13**: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. As you **PREPARE** your faith story, consider ways that Jesus has transformed your life and made you a "new creation."

3) For the next few minutes, talk with your group about how to prepare a faith story. A faith story has 3 components:

1. Describe what you were like before you had a relationship with Jesus
2. Describe how you came to have faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior
3. Describe what you are like now that you have faith in Jesus, are reconnected to God, and have the Holy Spirit living in you

4) Ask a student or two to share their faith story at next week's Engage meeting. Ask a student or two to share the gospel message and invitation [below] and remember to use the Response Cards found on the First Priority website under the Students tab: www.firstprioritytampa.org

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

Week Four: ENGAGE

Use your faith story to **ENGAGE** your campus for Christ. Share the gospel message and invitation.

This Week's 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.

[Remember to pass out the Response Cards after the Gospel message]

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).

[REPORT ATTENDANCE AND DECISIONS ON THE PHONE APP or TEXT YOUR SCHOOL NAME & INFO TO \(813\) 390-5964](#)