

THE HOPE OF CHRIST IN EVERY STUDENT IN AMERICA



# TRANSFORMATION IS NEEDED

(HOPE)

A STRATEGY TO IMPACT YOUR  
SCHOOL FOR JESUS

IN OUR CHURCHES,  
SCHOOLS,  
FAMILIES,  
COMMUNITIES,  
CITIES,  
AND NATION.



## FROM OUR DIRECTOR



### **The only way to bring HOPE to America**

*Hope. A word that in our physical world simply implies a desire for a set outcome, expectation or desire to happen. In the spiritual sense, it is a longing inside of us that is often left unfulfilled. As believers in Jesus, we know that that longing for hope can only be fulfilled [forever] by having a relationship with Christ. Sure, we can hope to have a great vacation which can lead to a good time with family. But we all know that the hope is lost the first morning back at work/school when you are exhausted and back to the routine of life.*

In America, we are hearing that there is a decline in Christianity. My opinion is that the decline is not as great as the stats say, but that more people are being honest in claiming the title 'Christian'. Being a Christian is not as socially acceptable as it once was. Why claim something you were only on the fringe about anyway if it could potentially hurt social status? With this honesty comes opportunity! An opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus with those that have never heard. With fewer claiming the title, it is easier to have the conversation of repentance and HOPE found in Jesus Christ.

We need to realize that not all students who grow up in church even know what the Good News of Jesus is. They may have heard the stories of David, Daniel, Moses, Christmas, Abraham, and Easter, but they are not guaranteed to understand that Jesus came, died on the cross, rose, and desires a relationship with them.

What if we took the 45% of students who still call themselves Christian in Birmingham, AL or the 12% of students who call themselves Christian in Riverside, CA and help them share HOPE with those that have never heard? Even with only 12%, they are one of the largest, if not THE largest group of people at the school. Let's help them be the most influential.

As adults, we cannot step onto the school campus and preach Jesus, but students can. So what can we do? We can pray. We can coach students. We can know the law. We can adopt a school. We can provide insight into the community. The best thing we can do is promote unity as the body of Christ! How can the LGBT be so influential with less than 2% of the population claiming the lifestyle? Unity.

Let's unite the local body of Christ with a plan of action to influence your school with the Gospel.

**Brad Schelling**  
*Director of Expansion*



# TRANSFORMATION IS POSSIBLE

*God has given us a time tested, proven strategy for bringing transformation to the public middle and high schools in a community. When God's people commit to unity in their community, starting with prayer, working essential networks, and targeting key schools, their lives will change along with the spiritual climate of the community.*

**By using the HOPE cycle, here are how the different networks of people in your community will be impacted:**

## STUDENT'S WILL:

- Get closer to God
- Strengthen their prayer life
- Discover there are more Christians than any other group at school
- Unite around a plan to share the Good News of Jesus at school
- Become trained missionaries to the teenage culture in America

## PARENTS WILL:

- Be praying for students, teachers, and administrators
- Write encouraging notes, serve the club, and bless others
- See students come to know Christ
- Watch lives being changed by the Holy Spirit
- Watch God change attitudes at school

## STUDENT MINISTERS WILL:

- Unite, mobilize and empower the students to impact their school
- Find a community of Youth Ministers
- See God work through His people
- Grow in youth group attendance
- Grow in prayer lives
- Become more relevant in the community
- Have many testimonies of life change

## YOUR COMMUNITY WILL:

- Be prayed for on a daily and weekly basis
- Become a place of active ministry and outreach
- Experience transformation as students and churches become passionate about life change
- Have ownership of taking the gospel to students in your community





## STUDENT EVANGELISM

# THE HOPE CYCLE

### What it is

HOPE is more than a cycle or acronym; it is a strategy to change the spiritual climate of the school and the world around you.

### How it works

For nine months, you have assignments built around a proven relationship evangelism strategy done together as a group of students at school. H.O.P.E. is Help week, Overcome week, Prepare week, and Engage week.

**Help:** Equipping the Christian students with foundational truth to be able to articulate a simple gospel message in thirty seconds or less.

**Overcome:** Motivation and inspiration to overcome our fear, worry and doubts we have about sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**Prepare:** Giving 1-3 students the opportunity to prepare and share their journey of faith in God (in its entirety or in part).

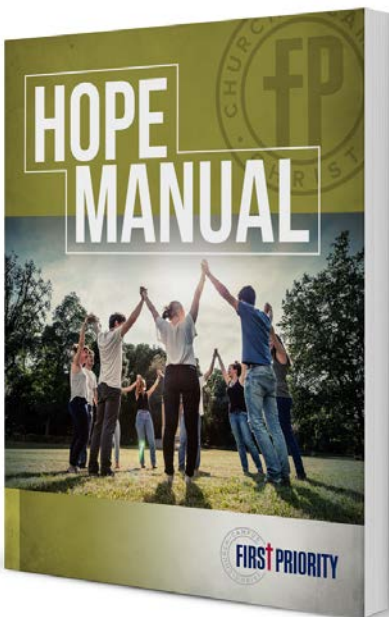
**Engage:** The opportunity for the believing students to invite their non-believing friends they have been praying for to come and hear about the HOPE of Christ.

### What it Costs

The physical cost of the HOPE Manual is only \$10. The actual cost is much greater! You will enter into spiritual warfare and battle for time, pride, and the lives of students. Can you afford it?

"We go to school every day in the greatest mission field in the world. We sit next to students who have no idea about the hope that can be found in Christ."

*~Hayden - Student Leader*



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*"I believe in the ministry and leadership of First Priority. I want to encourage you to support and get involved in First Priority."*

DAN CATHY

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## ESSENTIAL NETWORKS

# FOOTBALL ANALOGY

### What it is

First Priority works well as a strategy for the local church if the local community takes the time to organize each component of the strategy. To explain this, we will compare life as a Christian in the U.S. to the necessary components of a football game. First Priority is the game plan for the students in the community to come together at school and live the game of faith everyday.

**Students:** "Players on the field" as [indigenous] missionaries to the teenage culture at school.

**Teachers:** "Referees on the field" who can't play in the game but make sure that the rules of the school are being followed and the door to the classroom is open.

**Youth Ministers:** "Coaches on the sideline" who train, equip, plan, and strategize to help the students lead the club with excellence and achieve the desired outcomes.

**Parents:** "Fans in the stands" who promote and provide for the club, and encourage and pray for the students as they play the game.

**Business Leaders:** "Owners of the team" who provide health, structure, and longevity, overseeing all the ministry in the local schools, ensuring that the mission and vision to share HOPE with students lasts for decades to come.

### Who else can make a difference?

Church Institutions can adopt a school as a mission field.

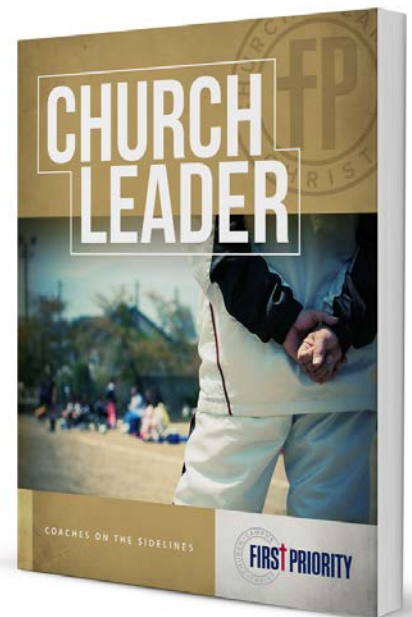
School Administrators can learn how to legally partner with faith-based organizations in school.

Prayer Partners can pray. Pray with people. Pray by yourself. Pray out loud. Pray silently. This does not happen if you do not pray.

### How it makes a difference

"I can't imagine my school without a First Priority club. I am grateful that my church sees my school as a mission field and sends me out as a missionary."

~Natasha, Student



*"Students enter the classroom of public schools to learn Math, History, English, and Science. Many of these students have real life problems that these subjects cannot solve. First Priority is meeting those needs."*

**MIKE WHITE, SUPERINTENDENT**



## GETTING STARTED

### PRAYER

When Nehemiah heard about the condition of the walls of his home city, he immediately sat down and wept. “For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.” (Nehemiah 1:4) The walls were completely destroyed. It is a natural reaction. What is your perception of the condition of teenage culture today? The truth is that hope is walking the halls of school every day. The truth is also that depression, addiction, abuse, neglect, and worry also walk the halls of school every day. Are you burdened for them? Will you have Nehemiah’s response to the destruction in our society? His response takes up the remainder of chapter one of Nehemiah in the Bible. Go ahead and let his prayer for Jerusalem become your prayer for your community.



*“The First Priority club at my sons middle school grew to more than 60 students who began to impact and change the campus. First Priority has bridged our churches and community to the area schools.”*

AMBER, PARENT

### BUILDING A NETWORK

First Priority at it’s core is a campus evangelism strategy done through and by the local church. When Billy Graham show up in a city there were many churches from many different denominations working together to share the gospel. Networking the church for a common cause of sharing the gospel on campus is what First Priority is about. The prayer of Jesus in John 17, make them one as we are one so the world will know that you sent me is a very powerful thing. Uniting the body of Christ on a school campus changes everything.

I often get asked how long it takes to start First Priority in a community. Most of the time, the question is really ‘How long until I can expect to have a club started?’ If that is your question, you can make a few phone calls and start a club in the school tomorrow. If you want to start First Priority though, that is a different situation. First Priority starts by networking churches and people and calling them to action.

### COMMUNITY DIAGNOSTICS

In order to prepare yourself for this task, it is important that you do some research and find out what is going on in your area. Seek counsel from local police, school guidance counselors, and church pastors. Here are some concepts and questions to get you started in conversations. After you have completed the diagnostic, be sure to get your results to First Priority of America. The goal is to get stats and [anonymous] stories of the spiritual need in your area.

For sample questions, go to [www.firstpriority.club/communitydiagnostics](http://www.firstpriority.club/communitydiagnostics).



## GETTING STARTED

# DEFINE TARGET AREA

With over 25 years of experience, we have found that the more local First Priority is, the more successful it is. That is why we want you to define your targeted schools in a defined area. First Priority is most successful when it starts with 3-5 churches taking on 1-2 schools the first year. Depending on your situation, that can be easy or very difficult. If it is difficult, some things to consider are community boundaries, county, school district lines, and the location of churches that rise up to lead.

# BECOMING A NETWORK COORDINATOR

A First Priority Network Coordinator becomes the visionary for the First Priority ministry strategy at the local level. A Network Coordinator takes on the role of serving local church ministries and supporting their efforts both inside the local church and on the public school campus.

A Network Coordinator must have commitment, character and competencies to lead others toward accomplishing the vision and mission of First Priority. A First Priority Network Coordinator must have credibility within the community to develop a leadership team, build and develop relationships for the FP Essential Networks within that community, and to unite and mobilize youth workers. A First Priority Network Coordinator can be compared with one of the greatest coordinators in history, Nehemiah. First Priority Network Coordinators must be leaders of;

### **PRAYER, PASSION, PERSISTENCE, PLANNING and PATIENCE**

As you begin to pray about God's call on your life to unite the church in your community, we strongly encourage you to read the book of Nehemiah and allow God to speak to you through His word.

To get started as a Network Coordinator, get on [www.firstpriority.club](http://www.firstpriority.club) and fill out an application.

# APPLICATION PROCESS

- Fill out application online and complete a background check
- Once you are accepted
- Attend First Priority Network Coordinator training to become certified
- Sign and submit a network covenant

Once you are approved and trained, we will move you into Phase 2: Deployment.

Phase 2 is an exciting time of networking churches, developing leadership, and launching a student-led evangelistic club in the middle and high schools. Don't delay! Take the necessary steps to become a certified First Priority Network Coordinator so you can use First Priority as a tool to reach students with the gospel.



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*"I have been in education for more than 23 years and I have never seen an organization work more closely in alignment with our schools like First Priority."*

**JOHN HALEY, PRINCIPAL**

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# H.O.P.E. IS A PLAN

"Stew in the hot and labor of your Lord Jesus Christ According to his good pleasure, for his word is to be kept again by a living faith through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." - 1 Peter 1:3



Have you ever traveled overseas or via church here to share the Gospel in another place? It's an amazing opportunity that requires devoted preparation, at some point to thank God. However, do you know that even the first day of school, you will be surrounded by one of the largest unchurched people groups in America?

Thank you for the opportunity to play a part in what God is going to do through you and your friends. We have a VISION

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# ENGAGE

Believe! We'll change about, but we can't be changed. Beliefs are not to be changed. Our mission is to bring the Gospel to the unchurched.

The fourth meeting of the HOPE Strategy is to engage your community with the changing message of the Gospel. Consider your "good news." The good news is that God loves us and we love Him. We can do for you. We can be united to a relationship with Him through His grace. This is our opportunity as Christians to bring the Gospel to the unchurched. We will have a clear presentation of the Gospel and have an opportunity to respond as well. The HOPE work week charges. Always share the Gospel from the heart. Make everyone there a Christian, make a clear presentation of the Gospel every time. Home systems. A Christian student should share the Gospel message. Home if student church and needs the Gospel presentation from the Kingdom. In the most powerful message in the world, it is the Word of Christ to a world that is dying.

Don't stop in prayer. Do not plan for success, but plan to be successful. And, thank you for being the Gospel witness. Why? Because you do not need to be anything that would

cause a man to believe or to be changed. Because they feel left out, and I'm not a member of it. It's a common scenario for those who have not yet joined their faith in Jesus Christ. This is our opportunity to share the Gospel with those who have not yet believed. This is our opportunity to share the Gospel with those who have not yet believed. This is our opportunity to share the Gospel with those who have not yet believed.

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# EXAMPLE GOSPEL PRESENTATION APPENDIX

**DISCUSS**  
 1. How do you feel about the HOPE Strategy?  
 2. How do you feel about the HOPE Strategy?  
 3. How do you feel about the HOPE Strategy?

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# STUDENT LEADER COMMITMENT

**HOPE**

- I will be a good example at school and committed to a Christ-like lifestyle.
- I will be a good example at school and committed to a Christ-like lifestyle.
- I will be a good example at school and committed to a Christ-like lifestyle.

Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Leader Name \_\_\_\_\_

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# BRING HOPE TO YOUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

We have helped launch First Priority for over 25 years. Whether you want to reach your school, the schools in a district, or an entire city, let us help you. It is powerful when you gather as many people as possible and cast the vision of what can happen when we as believers unite in prayer and evangelism.

**For more information on how to launch a First Priority movement in your community, contact us.**



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UNITING THE LOCAL BODY OF CHRIST WITH A PLAN OF ACTION  
 TO INFLUENCE THE SCHOOL WITH THE GOSPEL.