

JOY

Help Week Leader Guide

Help Week: A time for student leaders to equip their peers to become missionaries to their school, as they plan and pray for the month of campus ministry ahead.

PRE MEETING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Select one student to host this month's Help Week
- Remind students to post on social media and text friends reminding them about First Priority club

INTRODUCTION: 3 minutes

Welcome Students, Prayer and Introduction

- **Help Week Host:** "Welcome to First Priority! This week is Help Week, which is where we help each other become missionaries to our school. This year we're talking about the **FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT**. Last month we talked about **LOVE**, and this month we're going to talk about **JOY**. God wants us to have joy!"
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Introduce Student Leading Discussion:** "Today, my friend, _____, is going to share with us about how our joy plays in our impact on the world."



GROUP TIME: True Joy (20 Minutes)

Student Speaker: Hello everyone! Today we're going to talk about joy. You know the kind of joy you get when you eat your favorite ice cream? How about when your best friend tells you they love you? What about when your parents give you an awesome gift? God's joy is like that....but even better. Here's one verse about it:

"But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace..." Galatians 5:22-23 NLT (emphasis added)

"I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!" -John 15:11 NLT



Joy is an amazing thing. Who has any type of law against joy? No one, because that would be ludicrous. Joy is just, good and it is always good. Christians are given joy through Christ.

Now, many out there in the world often think that Christians are a bunch of judgmental kill-joys. But if that were accurate, why would God ask Christians to be people who are overflowing with joy for others to see? Even though joy isn't always natural, it is something that Christians are given through Christ.

God asks us to radiate love. You know that glow a guy gets whenever the girl he is crushing on says "yes" to a dance? That glow is something uncontainable. The joy that God gives a Christian is uncontainable.

David, in the Bible, shows us this kind of joy. Life was pretty much the pits for David. He had people trying to kill him (2 Samuel 15). David even felt depressed at times (see Psalm 22, 42-43, 69, for just a glimpse of some of the depression David went through).

But David didn't let that stop him. Imagine this: you have a really hard test coming up. You study, study, and study some more. The test comes, but you couldn't feel any worse; you are anxious, worried, and depressed. And let's say this test is killer difficult. How do you feel? Pretty depressed. But if you studied, then you can get through it. The truth that you studied gets you through the emotions you are feeling while taking the test. In the same way, the truth that God's love us gets us through difficult emotions that come in life. This is what David's life was like.

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David *reminded* himself of the truth: God's got our backs. This truth got him through depression. Even though he "walked through the valley of the shadow of death" he looked to the sunrise that was coming (Psalm 23).

This is what Jesus asks us to do. He asks us to look to Him, the one who saved us. He asks us to trust him. The truth is that *He wants to help us onto our feet.*

We hold onto God, even when we feel depressed.

As we hold onto God, he gives us *joy*. As we hold onto God, we can get through anything. As we hold onto God, we can have gladness that overflows into our friends, family, and the world.

Do you see God's joy in your life?

If so, that means you are holding onto God! Don't give up. Keep holding on.

If you don't, then maybe you need to hold onto God. You can trust Him. Even though life is hard (like in David's life) God never leaves you or forsakes you (Joshua 1:5).

Friends, you are more than the trials you have been through. You can have joy through the Spirit of God. I encourage you to take hold of the joy that God has in your life. [Can you talk to the students about areas of their lives where God wants to give them *more joy?*]. The joy of The Lord is consistent, even when our emotions are a roller coaster.

Even though joy isn't always natural, it is something that Christians are given through Christ.

Fruits
of the Spirit

JOY

APPLY IT:

Discussion Option 1: Why is finding joy so difficult? Talk about popular movies where the main character is depressed or songs where joy is hard to find. What makes joy attainable? (Hint, it comes from Jesus' way!)

Discussion Option 2: Talk about some of the "roadblocks" to joy. How do we get rid of them? Stress is bad! (Matthew 6:25-34)

Discussion Option 3: Talk about how it's impossible to do certain things simultaneously. Can you talk and listen at the same time? Can you run a marathon and eat a gallon of fettuccini alfredo at the same time (no throwing up allowed)? Can you cheat on a test and have integrity at the same time? (No...to all of these). Now, some anxiety is impossible to get rid of overnight. But connect the conversation about not being able to do two things at once, sometimes. It's difficult to have joy and worry, at the same time. This is tough! Talk about, even though it is difficult, letting go of worry. Holding onto Jesus removes doubt and fear!

ACTION CHALLENGE:

- **Group Challenge:** Love Challenge!
 - i. Be as joyful as you can, and capture on video or picture
 - ii. Post it on social media
 - iii. Tell others that your joy is the **fruit of the Spirit!** Hashtag #firstpriority if you can!
- **Share Challenge:** Share with someone this week how Christ gives you peace in your life.
- **Prayer Challenge:** Have someone close in prayer for your group to be messengers who bring the good news of the gospel.



WRAP UP: 2 minutes

- Share any FP Club announcements including that next week's meeting is Overcome Week.