

RISE

RUNNING DEER
LEADER'S GUIDE



DEAR SMALL GROUP LEADER,

Thank you for embarking on this journey. Our hope is that as you watch the film and testimonies, and as you go through these sessions, your group will be strengthened in what they believe about God and will understand more fully how the Bible applies to each of their lives. We encourage you to read through the overview below to get a good understanding of how each component fits into the program.

RISE PROGRAM
RUNNING DEER LEADERS GUIDE
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RISE PROGRAM: OVERVIEW

The RISE program is designed to reach the youth of the Native American community with the Truth of God's Word. It aims to provide with them practical ways of applying God's Word to issues and concerns they are facing on a daily basis. This program consists of three main components, each designed to work as a stand alone piece or in conjunction with the others:

Short Film, *Running Deer*, that comes equipped with:

- A Screening Guide
- A personal testimony from Chris Parrish, aka "Supaman"
- A Gospel Message from Chris Parrish

RISE *Book of Hope*

- This book is to be handed out to teens and details redemption, hope and healing while incorporating writings from Native Americans from various tribes.

Small Group Series that includes:

- A Leader's Guide
- 5 Short Testimony films of Native Americans to be used in conjunction with the lessons found in the Leader's Guide.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This leader's guide is one component of the RISE Small Group Series. It can be used to support the RISE book and *Running Deer* film; however, it is best used in conjunction with those two components and the 5 individual testimonies by helping to facilitate group discussion surrounding them. It aims to share both Biblical truths and real life stories to show how God can change their lives just as he changed others.

Each session will follow the same format and use the same elements: Scripture, Activity, Testimony, Scripture Teaching and Application, Activity, Closing and Prayer.

Preparation is encouraged before beginning each session in order to familiarize yourself with the Bible passages, the Scripture Teaching, and any questions that may come up.

FORMAT DESCRIPTION

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

The desired goals for the session and what it aims to teach and accomplish.

SCRIPTURE:

Key Bible verses and passages for the session.

KEY SCRIPTURE TO REMEMBER:

Scripture verse for group memorization.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION:

Brief welcome and direction for introducing the day's session.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

A time to introduce the theme of the session in a fun, engaging way.

TESTIMONY SHOWING:

These provide a brief look into the lives of a Native American young person and the struggles they face.

SCRIPTURE TEACHING:

This allows a time to connect the testimony film with the Scripture passages.

SCRIPTURE APPLICATION:

This allows a time to facilitate group discussion surrounding the testimony and what the lessons mean to them personally.

ACTIVITY:

A fun activity to engage students in the theme and help it to become real to them in a practical way.

CLOSING AND PRAYER:

Overview of the session, what was learned, and a prayer for the lessons to become real in their lives.

OPTIONAL SESSION:

FILM SHOWING

NOTE

Ideally, the young people you are meeting with have already seen the film, *Running Deer*, and has signed up for your Small Group series to dive deeper into God's Word and what He has for their lives. If this group has already seen the film, *Running Deer*, please proceed to **Session 1: Created for Relationship**.

If your group has not already seen the film, *Running Deer*, along with the testimony video and Gospel presentation from Chris Parrish, you have two options:

OPTION A

Make the film showing into an extra session, extending the program to 6 weeks.

OPTION B

Extend **Session 1** to include the film showing (*Please note that you would need about two hours total for the film showing and Session 1*).

Welcome the students.

Share that you're excited to meet with them over the next few weeks and to learn together.

Explain to the students that you have a short film you'd like to share with them called *Running Deer*.

***Running Deer* is based on the struggle of a Native American teen named Tyler who is caught at a crossroads between moving on from life in his small town, and facing the realities at home with the people who mean the most to him.** Though he has a broken relationship with his father, and his mother abandoned them both, there is an underlying desire for reconciliation. Tyler is a talented runner who has the opportunity to be scouted for college track scholarships, but he is also caught up with trying to fit in with the other local teens who spend their time stealing and drinking at the river's edge. When Tyler finds something out about his childhood friend Rayen, he makes a pivotal decision that will affect his faith in God and his future.



FILM SHOWING: RUNNING DEER

Please refer to the Screening Guide as you show the film.

After the film, ask if anyone has any questions about the film. Next, invite the group to discuss the film by asking the following questions:

What were some of the specific challenges or problems that Tyler faced?

How was Tyler different from his friends?

Did having a relationship with God make all these problems go away?

How did Tyler's faith in God help him? How can it help YOU face your problems?

OPTION A

Share that if there is anyone who doesn't have a relationship with Jesus that you would love to talk with them afterwards, answer any questions they have, and pray with them.

Close

Thank them for coming and watching the film. Briefly say in a few sentences what you learned. Close with prayer.

OPTION B

Share that if there is anyone who doesn't have a relationship with Jesus and would like one, that you would love to talk with them afterwards, answer any questions they have, and pray with them.

Take a short break and continue on with [Session 1: Created for Relationship](#)

SESSION 1:

CREATED FOR RELATIONSHIP

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- To help students understand that God originally intended for us to live life with Him, free from death and suffering.
- To help students discover through Scripture that when the first two humans sinned it brought sin and death to all humans.
- To teach students that God sent his Son, Jesus, to die for us so that we can have a relationship with Him that sets us free from sin and death.

SCRIPTURE

Creation (Genesis 1-2)

The Fall (Genesis 3)

KEY SCRIPTURE TO REMEMBER:

Everyone was going to be punished because Adam sinned. But because of the good thing that Christ has done, God accepts us and gives us the gift of life.

Romans 5:18 (CEV)

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION:

Welcome the students.

Share that you're excited to meet with them over the next few weeks and to learn together.

Explain that you have a short film to share with them, but first you have a fun activity for them to take part in.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Items needed:

- Bag of small marshmallows
- Toothpicks

Preparation:

Prior to the group arriving, create a small structure using the toothpicks and marshmallows for the students to recreate. (**Note: It may be helpful to make two of the same structure and hide one while the students try to rebuild the one you dismantle.**)

Show your toothpick and marshmallow structure to the group. Ask the students to raise their hands if they think they could make an identical structure.

Next, break students up into pairs. Provide each pair of students enough marshmallows and toothpicks to begin.

Explain to the students that they have one minute to study the structure. After that, you will destroy your structure, and they will have three minutes to try and rebuild the structure that you originally created. After three minutes, give candy or a small prize to the team that replicated your structure the closest. (Or if they are similar, award the pair who completed their structure first.)

Ask the following questions of the activity:

What part of building the structure did you find the most difficult?

Who in the room would have the easiest time putting this structure back together?

After hearing their answers, explain that the builder of the structure would know best how to rebuild it. Ask if they have ever wondered why bad things happen to them. Share that sometimes we question why difficult or bad things happen to us (like Tyler in the film) and feel like

there is no way for the broken areas of our life to be fixed. In the same way that we would ask the builder of the structure to rebuild, we need to ask God—the One who created us—for the answer to how to rebuild our lives.

Share that this next film shows the story of a girl named Alicia who was in a horrific car accident. Explain that they will discover what she learned through this short film.

TESTIMONY SHOWING: ALICIA

[Show Alicia's Testimony]

After the testimony, invite the group to discuss it by asking the following questions:

Why do you think God allowed this to happen to two people who loved him?

What does Alicia say she learned from what happened that she wouldn't have learned otherwise?

SCRIPTURE TEACHING:

In the beginning, everything was good. There was no suffering, sin, or death (Genesis 1:3). But things didn't stay that way for long. God gave the very first two people on earth only one rule (Genesis 2:15-17), but they broke it. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the fruit from the forbidden tree (Genesis 3:6-7). Suddenly, everything wasn't so good. As a consequence of their sin, death and pain entered the world (Genesis 3:14-24). Sin is the source of all the suffering we see today—in our lives, the lives of those around us, and throughout the world.

None of us are perfect. We all make mistakes. We all sin. We all fall short of God's standard of perfection (Romans 3:23). We all are in need of saving from our sin, but none of us can save ourselves (Ephesians 2:8-9). That's why, by sending Jesus, God made it possible for us to have a new life: a life that is restored to our Creator. A life in which we can know what it means to truly live.

SCRIPTURE APPLICATION:

Encourage everyone to discuss the Scripture teaching by asking the following questions:

What was life like before Adam and Eve disobeyed God?

After they sinned, how do you think they felt? What were the consequences?

Why did God send His Son, Jesus?

How can accepting Jesus' free gift of salvation make a difference in your life?

ACTIVITY:

Items needed:

- Paper (one sheet for each student)
- Pens, pencils and/or coloring supplies

Preparation:

None

Give each student a sheet of paper and invite him or her to write a few sentences about, or draw a picture of, the different ways sin has caused brokenness in their own lives or in the lives of people they know. (Assure the students that this activity can be kept completely private—they don't have to share what they write or draw with anyone.)

Next, give each student another sheet of paper and ask him or her to write or draw about the areas of their lives that they would like Jesus to change.

(Note: This exercise may bring up hurts that others have caused them, or sin that involves others, therefore, please make sure to say during the exercise that the point of noting down areas of sin and brokenness is not to blame others, but to remember that God can heal every single thing they have written down and every broken relationship they have.)

Ask the students to keep these two pieces of paper so that they can add to them during the next session.

CLOSING:

Share with the students that Jesus has changed the lives of people all around the world, and that he wants to do the same for each of them.

Explain that during the next session, they'll learn more about God as their Father and how His love puts an end to the loneliness that many of us experience/ have experienced.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Invite the students to pray with you as you read the following prayer aloud:

Jesus,

Help us to trust you and to step into the new life you offer. We ask for your healing in the areas of brokenness that we have drawn or written about. We pray that you would start the process of change in our lives today.

Amen

SESSION 2:

GOD THE FATHER / IDENTITY

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- For students to discover the nature of God as a loving Father who will never leave them.
- For students to learn that their true identity is a child of God; they are not defined by circumstances or any labels that have been placed on them.
- For students to recognize that Jesus is a friend who is always present, even in hard times.

SCRIPTURE:

God is love (1 John 4:8); nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:39).

God is our friend who is closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24).

We are children of God (Romans 8:15-16, John 1:12).

We can call out to God as our Father (Galatians 4:6).

He is a Father to the fatherless (Psalm 68:5); He will not leave us as orphans (John 14:17-18).

KEY SCRIPTURE TO REMEMBER:

Before the world was created, God had Christ choose us to live with him and to be his holy and innocent and loving people. Ephesians 1:4 (CEV)

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION:

Welcome the students.

Welcome the students. Share that you're excited to meet with them for this session and learn together.

Introduce yourself by sharing your family background and a short description of your life. (Make a note to specifically share some good and bad things that have come to shape who you are today.) Share how Jesus has personally become a key part of your identity.

Explain that during this session you will be talking about how much our Creator values each and every one of us. He is the One who gives us each our true identity.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Items needed:

- A box (large enough to accommodate a mirror)
- Mirror (that will fit inside the box)
- Paper (one sheet for each student)
- Pens and/or pencils

Preparation:

Before the students arrive, set the box on a table and place the mirror inside it. Keep it hidden until you begin the activity.

Share with the group that you're about to show them the most beautiful thing that has ever been created. Explain that it's so valuable, that they can only view it one at a time. Share that they must look at it and then take their seat without speaking.

Invite the students to come and look into the box one-by-one. Remind them to be silent as they do so.

Next, pass out the paper and pens or pencils to the students. Ask them to record some of their thoughts or feelings from when they saw themselves in the mirror. Encourage them to be honest. Remind them that their responses are to be kept private. They're for their eyes only.

Invite the students to come and look into the box one-by-one. Remind them to be silent as they do so.

Next, pass out the paper and pens or pencils to the students. Ask them to record some of their thoughts or feelings from when they saw themselves in the mirror. Encourage them to be honest. Remind them that their responses are to be kept private. They're for their eyes only.

TESTIMONY SHOWING: COREY

Give a short introduction to the testimony:

This testimony is about a young man named Corey who was brought up in a Christian home but at a young age was introduced to pornography by his friends. He felt increasingly alone as the guilt got stronger and stronger—he knew he was doing something wrong but he couldn't bring himself to tell anyone because he felt so ashamed. It was only when he realized his true identity in Jesus, in spite of what he was doing, that he was able to change.

[Show Corey's Testimony]

After the testimony, invite the group to discuss it by asking the following questions:

What are some specific events in your life that have shaped how you view yourself?

How do you think others view you? Why?

What are some specific things you like and/or dislike about yourself?

What do you think God the Creator created you to be?

SCRIPTURE TEACHING:

God created me and he created you. He created each of us with a true, purpose-filled identity (Jeremiah 29:11). God loves us and created us to know him (1 John 4:8, Romans 8:39). In fact, he loves us so much that he wants us to call out to him as our Father (Galatians 4:6). Our true identity is as his child (Romans 8:15-16, John 1:12, Ephesians 1:4).

But sometimes other things threaten to shape our identity. The culture we live in, our relationships with others and our present circumstances may work against what God created us to be. Many times these false labels lead us into a life of pain, because we don't realize who God the Father created us to be.

Read: The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)

Explain that this story is a picture of our lives when we fail to recognize the relationship our Father in heaven offers to us.

God the Father has unconditional love for each one of us, no matter where we are now and what we have done in our past. Just like the Father ran to his returning son, God waits with open arms to receive us back to Himself.

The God of the universe is our Father. He knows everything about us, and he wants us to know that our true identity is as a "child of God."

Nothing can separate us from His love. You may feel you are too far-gone or too messed up, but there is nothing that you have done that God the Father will not forgive. No matter what kind of relationship you have had with your family on earth or the broken path you have encountered, you can start new.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! 2 Corinthians 5:17

You never have to be alone again. God the Father rejoices over you when you turn to Him.

SCRIPTURE APPLICATION:

Encourage the students to discuss the scripture teaching by asking the following questions:

What specific things work to negatively shape your identity?

How can you, knowing your true identity as a child of God, help prevent this?

How do you think God feels when you allow yourself to be viewed negatively or devalued?

In which way do you relate to the lost son?

How do you think the son felt after he had wasted all that and his father welcomed him back no questions asked?

How will the way God the Father looks at you change the way you see yourself?

How will the Creator's love for you help you value other people around you?

ACTIVITY:

Items needed:

- 2 large poster boards
- A variety of different colored markers

Preparation:

Label one poster board "The World." Label the other, "Child of God."

As a group, list the different ways society, culture and others identify us on the poster board labeled "The World."

On the poster board labeled "Child of God," list the ways (contrary to what the world says) God wants us to find our identity in Him.

CLOSING:

Thank the students for their participation and openness during the discussions. Share that during the next session, they will be exploring forgiveness and how it can help free us all from anger and brokenness.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Invite the students to pray with you as you read the following prayer aloud:

Jesus,

We know that we have a Father who loves us and will never leave us. Though the world may try to label us, we know we all have a true identity in you as children of God. We know that once we've accepted your Son, Jesus, we're never alone.

Amen

SESSION 3:

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- To help students learn that Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted and he asks for us to give him the things that burden us.
- To teach students that forgiveness is an important step to finding freedom from pain in our past.
- To help students begin the healing process from pain in their own past.

SCRIPTURE:

Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted and set the captives free (Isaiah 61:1-3, Luke 4:18).

We are to give our cares over to God (1 Peter 5:7).
Jesus asks us to forgive so we will be forgiven (Mark 11:25).

We are to stop being bitter and forgive others (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Holding on to anger gives the devil room to work in our lives (Ephesians 4:26-27).

KEY SCRIPTURE TO REMEMBER:

If you have sinned, you should tell each other what you have done. Then you can pray for one another and be healed. The prayer of an innocent person is powerful, and it can help a lot.

James 5:16 (CEV)

Scripture Application:

Encourage the students to discuss the scripture teaching by asking the following questions:

Why is it difficult to forgive people who have wronged or hurt us?

Why is forgiving others important to Jesus?

What specific steps can you take to forgive others?

How can you ask others for forgiveness?

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION:

(Before the start of the session, fill a backpack with large stones for the introduction activity.)

Welcome the students. Share that you're excited they're here for this session and for what you'll learn together this week.

Show the backpack to the group. Ask a volunteer to please put it on and to stand with it on while you continue with the discussion.

Explain that there are many things that impact our lives and stay with us for years and years. Many of these things can gradually drag us down, causing us to feel like we're carrying an extra load that we were never supposed to bear.

Remind the students that in the last session, we learned that God the Father loves us. Even if we go through difficult times, God doesn't want us to carrying these things that weigh us down.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Ask the volunteer who's been wearing the heavy backpack to share with the group how it feels and what he/she thinks is inside the backpack. (If time permits, pass the backpack from one student to the next, allowing each student to feel its weight.)

Close the activity by opening up the backpack and showing the group all the stones inside. Explain that each one of these stones is like a burden each of us carries around inside our hearts and minds. These stones are like the burdens God never intended for us to bear alone.

TESTIMONY SHOWING: JOE

Share that you are going to show Joe's story. Joe was abused as a child and this was something that negatively affected his life. He fell into the wrong crowd and into a cycle of self-destruction. Though he tried to forget and get away again and again, his old life kept coming back up to the surface. God humbled him completely, and it was only when he was able to truly forgive that he was able to break free.

[Show Joe's Testimony]

After the testimony, invite the group to discuss the following questions:

Does God take all of our burdens away?

What specific things are causing an extra burden in your life?

How can God help relieve us of the weight of these burdens?

SCRIPTURE TEACHING:

Share that the next passage is a story Jesus told to illustrate how important it is for us to follow his example and forgive all who have done wrong to us.

Read: The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant
(Matthew 18:21-35)

Explain the passage:

Jesus came to freely forgive us (1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 2:12). He wants us to follow his example and forgive others (Ephesians 4:32). In fact, Jesus said we're not just to forgive seven times but seventy-seven times (Matthew 18:21-22)!

Others will cause us hurt and pain. In fact, often those we love the most cause the most difficult and deep pain. We can either forgive or hold on to the hurt, pain and anger. When we choose to forgive, we are able to let the anger go and focus on healing. Choosing to hold a grudge, however, only allows our pain to fester and grow. You may feel like people hurt you often, but you also hurt others. We all do—and when we do, it's important to recognize our own need to seek forgiveness.

ACTIVITY:

Items needed:

- Paper (one sheet for each student)
- Pens, pencils and/or coloring supplies

Preparation:

None

Give each student a sheet of paper and ask them to write the names of people who have caused them pain and that they can choose to forgive. If time permits, encourage them to draw a picture or write about a specific event that they'd like God to fix or heal. (Due to the sensitive nature of this activity, remind the students that their responses will be kept completely private.)

While the students are writing/drawing, talk through the steps to healing from painful events:

Identify and name the event that has brought you pain.

Take Jesus to the point of that pain and ask him to move into that area and heal you.

After the activity is completed, explain the steps to forgiveness:

- 1 Ask Jesus to forgive you for not forgiving those who have wronged you.**
- 2 Forgive the person you have written about by saying “Jesus, I forgive _____ for doing _____ to me and I release them into your justice for you to deal with them.”**
- 3 Ask the Lord to release you from the anger and bitterness and pain that was caused as a result of the wrong that was done to you.**
- 4 Ask Jesus to forgive you for all the things you have done to hurt yourself and others as a result of what others have done to hurt you.**

CLOSING:

Go over what you’ve learned in this session—that God wants each person there to have freedom from the pain of their past.

Remind them that they have to stop ignoring unresolved pain because it will constantly drag them down. Instead, Jesus stands ready to help them heal from the pain of their past when they are willing to face it with Him. (Remind them that this may mean they have to go back and revisit the cause of the pain, but they can do it with Jesus’ help.)

Share that with Jesus they can have FREEDOM—they don’t have spend one more minute thinking about what happened or how they can get back at that person. Forgiveness does not mean that what that person did was right, but it releases it to the justice of God, and all the dark and ugly things that come along with it leave your life as well!

Thank the students for their participation in answering the questions and sharing their stories. Share that during the next session, you’ll be looking at power—the power to overcome our hurts and the power to live life joyfully in God.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Invite the students to pray with you as you read the following prayer aloud:

**Jesus,
I know you love me. I know you don’t want me to carry around pain, hurt and anger. Please give me the strength to forgive the people who have caused me pain. Help me to let go of the pain they’ve caused, so that I may find healing in you. Give me the wisdom and humility to also ask for forgiveness from those whom I’ve hurt.**

Amen

SESSION 4:

POWER TO OVERCOME

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- Students are encouraged that, in Jesus, they can break free from negative things that have a stronghold on their life.
- To help students know what to do when times of trouble come.
- To show students that there is a real enemy of their soul and how to defeat him with Jesus' help.

SCRIPTURE:

Jesus gives us power to destroy things that have a stronghold on our lives (2 Corinthians 10:4).

New thinking brings a changed life (Romans 12:2).

With Jesus, we are more than conquerors and nothing can stand in our way (Romans 8:31, 37).

God gives us spiritual armor to stand against our enemy, the devil, and powers of darkness (Ephesians 6:11-13).

Jesus overcame temptation by responding with the Word of God. We can also use God's Word to defeat our enemy and temptation (Matthew 4:4).

KEY SCRIPTURE TO REMEMBER:

... God can be trusted not to let you be tempted too much, and he will show you how to escape from your temptations.
1 Corinthians 10:13 (CEV)

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION:

Welcome the students and share what you're going to learn this session: about the power we have in Jesus to overcome temptation.

Share that as Native Americans who God first placed on this land, we have a great heritage. Many of our tribes were known for having great warriors and respected people. For centuries, we lived freely and close to nature.

But many wrongs were done to Natives throughout the years, and our people are broken. There are many obstacles to be overcome. The good news is that there is nothing that can stand in our way—including past hurts—when we are connected to Jesus.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Items needed:

- A handful of small rocks
- A small piece of concrete (or a picture of it)

Preparation:

None.

Show the handful of rocks to the group. Explain that no matter who we are—including children of God—hurt and pain come our way, and they can be plentiful just like this handful of rocks.

Next, show the piece of concrete (or picture of it) to the group. Explain that God can use our pain to make us stronger than before, just like the many small rocks are bound together to form something stronger and more useful in concrete.

Explain that when we're connected to Jesus, when we're children of God, everything—including pain and hurt—can work for our good (Romans 8:28).

TESTIMONY SHOWING: BRITTANY

Give an introduction to the testimony—Brittany was in foster care growing up and was abused which made her feel vulnerable and insecure. This led her to seek out drugs and alcohol to make her feel better. Let's watch to see how she broke down those walls and learned that God was by her side no matter what.

[Show Brittany's Testimony]

After the film, invite the group to discuss it by asking the following questions:

Think about Brittany's hurt and pain. How did this make it harder to resist the temptation of drugs and alcohol?

What are some specific things you can do to stand strong against sin?

SCRIPTURE TEACHING:

It's difficult to stand against temptation, especially when we're hurting. But Jesus did it. And in doing so, he gave us an example of how to defeat temptation.

Read: The Temptation of Jesus

Matthew 4:1-11

While on earth, Jesus was in a desert for forty days and nights, and there, the devil tempted him. When Jesus was hungry, the devil told him to turn stones into bread. But Jesus replied that God's Word says no one lives on only food but on every word that God has spoken (Matthew 4:1-5).

Next, the devil told Jesus to jump from a tall building because God's angels would come down and save him. Jesus told the devil that God's Word said not to test God (Matthew 4:5-7).

Lastly, the devil offered Jesus all the kingdoms on earth

and their power if only he would bow down and worship him. Jesus told the devil to go away because God's Word says to worship only God (Matthew 4:8-11).

And you see what happened? The devil left. Jesus used God's Word to stand strong and defeat temptation. There is a real enemy who works in the unseen realm to destroy our lives. There are also things that try to keep us trapped and depressed, things such as addictions and ways of thinking. The Bible refers to them as strongholds; they simply have a strong hold on our lives.

The truth of the matter is that, in Jesus, we have the power to defeat our enemy and all of the things that seek to destroy us. The way to do that is to use God's Word to break them. Jesus said, "It is written" and defeated the devil by speaking truth rather than giving in to the temptation to doubt what God the Father had already said.

There is nothing that is too strong for us to overcome with Jesus. The question is: do we want to change or remain in the same cycles that have brought us, and others, down in the past?

SCRIPTURE APPLICATION:

Encourage the students to discuss the scripture teaching by asking the following questions:

How can you know Jesus understands your struggle against temptation?

How did Jesus defeat the devil?

Jesus demonstrated that God's Word is power. How can you specifically use this power in your own life?

ACTIVITY:

Items needed:

- A small ball (suitable for tossing)

Preparation:

None.

Ask the students to stand in a large circle. Explain that the person holding the ball must ask a question out loud and then toss the ball to another student. That student must catch the ball and answer within 5 seconds. Any student who takes longer than 5 seconds to answer is out of the game and must sit down. The game continues until one student is left standing and declared the “winner”.

Share with the group that this illustrates how we never know when temptation may come our way. We always have to be prepared. For this reason, it’s important to know God’s Word well, to hide it in our hearts so that we’ll have the power to resist temptation when we need to.

CLOSING:

Go over what we’ve learned this session: In Jesus, you have the power to overcome the things that have a hold on you.

Each of us here have different struggles. The devil uses many different tactics to try to bring us down—for some it’s addictions, for others it’s depression and destructive patterns of thinking. These are the things that God wants us to change. And he gives us the power to demolish all these things.

God wants to break the cycle of hopelessness that has tried to define your life. He gives you power to overcome a defeated spirit. Once you accept Jesus into your life, one of the major battles is learning what it means to be a new creation. You take lies you have believed and replace them with the truth—and that brings transformation.

Many times it is the influence of friends or family that keeps them and us stuck living life in a bad way. God promises that when we live life as he designed, we find the “new normal” that can change future generations. We are not guaranteed to never struggle in life. In fact Jesus said that we will face many struggles. However when we live our lives for Jesus, we are promised that we will eventually have the victory, struggles will shape us into a better person, and he will be with us every step of the way. That’s pretty awesome when you consider that most struggles leave us feeling alone and defeated. With Jesus, we can still have joy knowing he is with us and he is going to bring us through.

Thank the students for their participation. Share that the next session is the last one, and you’ll be exploring their future. It’s guaranteed to be a future filled with hope!

CLOSING PRAYER:

Invite the students to pray with you as you read the following prayer aloud:

Jesus,

I know you understand my struggle. Please give me the strength to stand strong against temptation and resist sin just as you did.

Open my heart and mind to the truth of your Word so that I can use it in powerful ways in my own life.

Amen

SESSION 5:

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- To encourage students that God has a plan for each person's life.
- To help students learn that part of God's purpose is for them to help others gain freedom in their life through Jesus.
- To share helpful information that will help them grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus.
- To teach students how to live a life that pleases God.

SCRIPTURE:

God promises each of us hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).

God has called us to be an example to others (1 Timothy 4:12).

Now that we have discovered that Jesus is the source of life, we are sent to share Him with others (2 Corinthians 5:20).

We love Jesus by doing what he has commanded us to do. In the process, we discover his plan for our lives (John 14:23).

God's Spirit living in us guides us into truth (John 14:16-18).

KEY SCRIPTURE TO REMEMBER:

I will bless you with a future filled with hope—a future of success, not of suffering Jeremiah 29:11 (CEV).

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION:

Welcome the students to this final session. Share that you've enjoyed the last few sessions and you're excited to meet with them again.

Share that many of our Native people have a difficult time believing there is a future at all because of all the troubles that surround us. It is hard to see a positive future when many of us have experienced cycles of hopelessness and hurt. However, life with God promises a great future filled with prosperity and hope—both for us and for future generations.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Items needed:

- An egg
- A small bowl (to crack the egg into)

Preparation:

None

Show the egg to the group. Ask for volunteers to raise their hand and share aloud what they think is inside. Allow several students to share aloud.

Next, ask the students how they know what's inside. *(The students will likely rely on past experience. They've cracked open eggs before and seen what's inside firsthand.)*

Over the bowl, crack the egg open. Show the group the contents. Share that we all knew what the egg contained before we even opened it because of past experience. Explain that no matter how we may hurt or struggle today, we can trust that God has a hope-filled future waiting for us because He's demonstrated His faithfulness time and again with people in His Word.

TESTIMONY SHOWING: BRANDON

Let's watch Brandon's testimony. His life changed at age 10 when his dad was sent to prison. His family moved and he became a gang member. His wake up call came as he walked by a church and heard joyful music inside. He learned the plan God had for his future.

[Show Brandon's Testimony]

After the testimony, invite the group to discuss it by asking the following questions:

How did Brandon's life completely turn around after he accepted Jesus?

How can you know that God will be faithful to keep you on the right path?

SCRIPTURE TEACHING:

With God, we can know our own future is filled with hope. No matter how we may be suffering or hurting now, we can know it won't last forever because God will never let us fall (Psalm 55:22).

Read Acts 16:16-34

In this story, Paul and Silas had been dragged to the authorities, beaten and imprisoned. They're in the inner prison with no hope of escape, their feet locked in stocks. It looks like a hopeless situation.

Even in this situation, you can see their attitude from their actions—instead of complaining about where they are, they start singing and praising God. And look at what happens—God makes the earth shake, the doors open, they walk out! But more than that, their jailer falls down at their feet, trembling, and asks, "What must I do to be saved?" And not only is he saved, but his whole household with him.

This story shows that we belong to a loving God who cares for and provides for His children. Like Paul and Silas, we are called to respond to whatever situation we are in with faithful obedience and thanksgiving, in spite of how things may appear.

SCRIPTURE APPLICATION:

Encourage the students to discuss the Scripture teaching by asking the following questions:

How can reading about God's promises to others help us trust in him for our own future?

How can you specifically worship God with all your heart?

ACTIVITY:

Items needed:

None

Preparation:

None

Play "Simon Says." Along with the verbal prompts, act out each set of directions. Start with simple tasks, but quickly progress to more difficult, multiple step actions.

Next, increase the difficulty further by asking the students to close their eyes and rely only on your words. Point out that it became more difficult to do exactly as "Simon said," when their eyes were closed. Explain that it can also be very difficult to follow God when we're distracted by our present circumstances but that it's important to keep our focus on him no matter how much we may be struggling or hurting.

CLOSING:

No matter how you feel about your life, one thing is certain: you are no mistake.

We can get overwhelmed with life and our current situation and ask questions like: why was I even born? According to God's Word, he formed you in your mother's womb. You had purpose from the very beginning. In Jeremiah 29:11, God promises to give each of you a hope and a future.

One awesome purpose that God has for each one of us is to be a messenger of hope to people around us.

The great life you now have is intended to be shared with others. It is up to you to now tell them, and show them, how to get connected to Jesus (2 Timothy). Think of the possibilities if your family and friends were to accept Jesus. Think of all the joy they would have if they had the hope that Jesus offers.

Thank the students for being part of the studies and for their participation. Remind the students that God loves each and every one of them, and He has a very special purpose and plan for their lives. Urge the students to remember this whenever struggles or hurt threaten to bring them down. Encourage them to embrace a life with Jesus so that they can walk boldly into the hope-filled future He's created for them. Remind them to now go out and share God's love with those around them.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Invite the students to pray with you as you read the following prayer aloud:

Jesus,

Thank you for securing our future. Help us to let go of the pains in our past so that we can walk boldly into the future you intended for us to have. Give me the strength to let go and let you lead me into the purpose and plan you have for my life.

Amen

YOU MADE IT!

Thank you again for taking his journey and faithfully going through each of the sessions with your group. God is undoubtedly working through the *Running Deer* film, the testimonies and the words you have spoken.

To learn more about OneHope, please visit www.onehope.net or call 1.800.GIV.BIBL (448.2425).

