

Purple Gorillas is a 3 week series by Philip Jenkins, youth minister for the Mt. Juliet Church of Christ in Mt. Juliet, TN.

Purple Gorillas is designed to get your students out of their comfort zone. Purple Gorillas teaches students how to have a faith that others can see. It will certainly be a series that your students remember. And they will be challenged to do some awesome stuff along the way.

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Blessings on your teaching!

The AIM Guys



Purple Gorilla Series

How long did it take you to notice the giant 4 foot purple gorilla on my back? (Talk it up: what if we all walked around with one of these on our backs? “Morning, John. Morning. “Morning purple gorilla.” How long do you think it would take people to notice? It would be immediate! In no time!

But here’s the question I really want you to consider tonight: **How long does it take for people to notice Jesus when they look at you?**

How long does it take people to notice that you spend time with Jesus? That you love him. That you love His Word. That you make His church a priority. That you want to walk like him, talk like him, love like him, live like him.

If you walked around with a purple gorilla kind of faith, where people were able to watch you and after a few short minutes they were able to say, “That guy is serious about his faith. That girl is a Christian.”

I want you to turn in your Bibles to Matthew 26. Starting in verse 69. A little background: Jesus is on trial to be killed. He’s been arrested, and he’s been mocked, the justice system is a joke. And all the key players are playing politics. Pilate wants to please the people, Herod wants to please Pilate, Caiaphas wants to please people, Pilate wants to please the Roman government and the Jewish people. And so here’s Jesus, the Savior of mankind, the one that all of the apostles had leaned on, the selfless one, and he’s standing alone.

Matthew 26:69 (DK) Now Peter was sitting outside (DL) in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.”

“Hey, wait a minute! You’re one of those guys who follows Jesus! I thought I recognized you!” Peter had gained a reputation for being a follower of Christ! What a great thing, right?! People recognized him from spending time with Jesus.

70 But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you mean.”

I don't follow Jesus. I'm not one of those Jesus people. I'm someone else.

71 And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus (DM)of Nazareth."

Hey, I know you! You one of Jesus' disciples!

72 And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man."

73 After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for (DN)your accent betrays you." 74 Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, (DO)"Before the rooster crows, you will (DP)deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

So here's Peter. And everybody that recognized Peter wanted to put him with Jesus. Except for him.

He blew it.

Maybe you can relate. Maybe all you've ever wanted to do is just blend in with the crowd like Peter did. I've been guilty of that too many times in my life. And instead of boldly showing people, "Yeah! I follow Jesus! It's the greatest life there is!" I've tried to look like everybody else!

Listen, if people recognize that you go to church, big whoop. If people recognize that you're friends with some Christians, that doesn't really matter! Here we read about Peter literally spending time with Jesus, but here that didn't matter. You know what mattered?

He was ashamed of it. He was ashamed of his faith. He was ashamed of Christ.

The truth of the matter is, it doesn't matter how much time you've spent around Jesus' people this summer. It doesn't matter how much time you've spent with Jesus. It didn't even matter how much time Peter spent with him. Jesus says "if you live like you're ashamed of me and my teachings, you're not my disciple."

Luke 9:26 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

I've shared this story before, but it fits so perfectly. Michael Davis in the lunchroom.

Maybe you hear that and you think, "People would say that about me. They have no idea that I love Jesus." If that's the case maybe you need to ask yourself "If people have no idea that I love Jesus, do I really love Jesus?"

Here at the beginning of a school year, perhaps there's nothing better that we could be asking! When people look at you, do they see Jesus?

Do they see Jesus in the way that you talk? Do you cuss? Do you tell dirty jokes? Do they see Jesus in the way that you laugh? Do you laugh at what everybody else laughs at? Do you laugh at the dirty jokes? Do you go see the movies that everybody else sees? Do you jump in and gossip with the best of them? Do you go to the same parties?

Do they see Jesus in the way that you dress? Do you dress in a way that would bring honor to Christ's name? Do people see Jesus when they look at you or do they go, "Whoa. Look at her." Are you pointing people to Jesus in the way that you dress or do you point to yourself? Look at her body. Check out her swimsuit.

Do they see Jesus when they look at your pictures on Instagram, or is it all about yourself, your body, your bikini, you, you, you?

What if the only way that people could discover that you were a Christian was by looking at your Twitter, or Facebook, or Instagram? How many people would draw that conclusion?

Listen, I don't say any of that to make you mad. I say it because if you wear the name of Christ, that literally means you are trying to be like Christ. And you can't be like Christ and go to some of those movies. You can't be like Christ and be posting those pictures that would cause others to lust. You can't be like Christ and talk like that.

I hope you hear this message tonight and go "I've got some pictures I need to delete (by the way, some of you do). I hope you hear this message and go, "I need to get rid of that movie. I need to delete that song. I need to go back and check my Instagram or Facebook or Twitter feed.

Maybe you're like Peter. Maybe you've messed up, and maybe tonight you feel like he felt when he realized that he had blown it and the rooster crowed. He went out and wept bitterly. He was distraught. I totally messed up. I did that all wrong.

Listen, I've got good news: God can rewrite your reputation. And here at the beginning of a new school year, I'm not so sure that there's a more perfect time!

I want you to turn over to Acts 4. (a little background)

10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that (L)by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, (M)whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. 11 (N)This Jesus[a] is the stone that was (O)rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.[b] 12 And there is (P)salvation (Q)in no one else, for (R)there is no other (S)name under heaven given among men[c] by which we must be saved.”

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

Remember that shame and guilt and despair? It became boldness. You know what that means? It means Peter did a 180. He did the complete opposite of denying Jesus. He boldly proclaimed his faith in Jesus.

Before, they had asked Peter, "Don't you follow Jesus?" A few days later, they didn't have to ask him. They didn't wonder anymore. They recognized that he had been with Jesus.

Jesus' followers ought to be bold guys!

Remember our original thought that kind of began all of this? How long does it take people to recognize or notice that we follow Jesus? What if was as simple as people going "Oh, hey look that guy's carrying around a purple gorilla." What if people were like "That guy follows Jesus"?

I started thinking, how would they notice? What's something simple that everybody could do that would really show your faith in a real way?

And so tonight, I want to give you a purple gorilla, and I want you to carry it around all week. Meaning here's something practical I want you to do until we meet on Sunday.

Are you ready? All this week and all next week, I want you to say a prayer at your lunch table.

My challenge for the week: start saying a prayer at the lunch table every day this week. You just see how long until someone notices "that purple gorilla."

MAN. THE MORE I THINK ABOUT THIS THE COOLER THIS WOULD BE! I'm serious. This would be so cool. In fact, I want all of you to try this one out tomorrow at school, and I want you to text me and tell me how it went!

I would LOVE IT, I MEAN LOVE IT if a whole bunch of y'all said tomorrow, "Hey, this might sound weird, but um, I'm going to say a prayer before I eat today. Is there anything I can be praying about for you or your family?"

They're going to look at you funny at first and they might even say something back jokingly at first, because they're not going to know what to do or say, but once they figure out that you're serious, they just might ask you to pray for something going on in their life.

So you know what you do the next day? Do it again. And the next day, and the next day and the next day.

And if they laugh at first, let them laugh. If they laugh at you, you're in good company: they laughed at Jesus. We've got to get more comfortable with being uncomfortable. God never asked us to get comfortable. You won't find that in this book, I promise you that.

Instead, God says "This world isn't your home. Don't get comfortable here."

I mean, what if that became your every day routine before lunch?

Before long, guys, you might even be leading a prayer for the whole lunch table. Someone looks over and says "Hey. What are y'all doing?"

"Oh, we have a prayer at our table before we eat. Why don't you come over tomorrow and sit with us."

Why are we so afraid to do that?

Well, because someone might notice. Good!!! They'll know that you pray! People might even start a rumor about you. You see that guy over there? He leads a prayer at the table before he eats. See that girl? She bows her head and says a silent prayer before she eats!

How awesome of a reputation would that be?!? He goes to Mt. Juliet church of Christ. I saw another girl from that church praying yesterday. Yeah? They must really care about their faith. I need to get more serious about my faith. I might go there sometime.

You're in a pretty awesome situation if the worse case scenario is that people start saying things like "She's a Christian."

It's not about being showy. It's about being a Christian. It's about being a city on a hill, it's about letting your light shine so that others can see it. Jesus didn't want us to put that light

under a bushel! Let's stop worrying about doing everything so low-key and start spreading God's love a little louder!

So there's your purple gorilla of the week. How many of you will do that this week?

Purple Gorillas Lesson 2

The Lesson

-Purple gorillas series: What if we had a purple gorilla kind of faith that everybody else could see? Not in a showy kind of way that would draw attention to ourselves, but in a way that would cause others to see Christ in us. Because that's really what we want! We want to show Jesus to people!

-And so this past week, we asked everybody to take a purple gorilla to school with them. Something that would catch people's attention in a good way and that would bring attention to our faith and the God that we serve. We asked you to say a prayer at your lunch table.

-And you guys really stepped up and rose to the occasion. It was AWESOME hearing from so many of you, and seeing how people were reacting to this big giant purple gorilla at the lunch table, that is prayer. Because praying people stick out like purple gorillas.

I just want to share some of these with you.

-Dylan Baker said, "Hey, me, James, and Joshua are all praying today at lunch."

-Carlee Illias said Mikayla Keopf, me, and my brother got the whole lunch room to say a prayer before we ate lunch!

-Will Speight all prayed at the lunch table with Juliebeth, Mikayla Welch, and Christian Frans, and two other people from school. They asked if they had prayer requests and they did. It was awesome!

-Julianne Colwell said a prayer at her table. She even offered to pray for the people at the table.

-Malina Yap said she prayed at her table and got to pray for her friend, too.

-Tyler Brown: said a prayer at lunch today with friends and my friends prayed with me. Then they went to Cinco later that night with those two same friends and they said something about praying before he did! And they had a prayer together before they ate that night.

-Emilie Shannon, Natalie Arnold, Tanner Primm, and Daniel Hines prayed at their lunch table with another girl from school. The girl was talking to somebody when we had our prayer. Daniel led it and when they finished she said, "Hey, wait, did y'all just pray? And we said yes and she said "I missed it!" And I reassured her that it would happen again."

-And finally! This one's cool. Chandler Williams: teacher said she was having to be her mom's caretaker. He asked if he could pray for her.

I don't know about y'all but that gets me pumped up! I love that we have a youth group that embraces God's will, and embraces challenges like this to do God's will even if it seems a little intimidating at first!

Tonight, I want to add another purple gorilla to your collection, ok? I'll tell you more about it in a few minutes, but first I've got a question for you.

Does anybody in here know who this is? (no it's not Tucker Worley in 5 years)

His name is Pistol Pete Maravich. He is a legendary NBA player.

When he was a kid he dribbled 2 ½ miles to the nearest playground in Clemson, S.C., and the same distance back. He dribbled on his bicycle. He dribbled in thunder and lightning. One time his dad even had him dribble out the side of the car.

He said, 'Let's see if you can really control that thing, Pistol.'" Pistol showed him that he could.

Get this: Pistol Pete estimated once that between the ages of 5 and 17, he spent **20,000 hours** playing ball.

And it showed.

He holds nearly every single college scoring record and **AVERAGED** 44.2 points per game. Btw, this was all without the three point line (which hadn't been introduced to the game of basketball yet!). He went on to have a fantastic NBA career, and in 1987 Pistol Pete was inducted into the NBA hall of fame.

We'll come back to Pistol Pete in a minute, but now I want you to turn to Psalm 119 in your Bible. Go ahead and turn there if you would.

I'm not sure how much you know about Psalm 119, but I want you to take a look at it. What's the first thing you notice? It's SO LONG! By the way, the word psalm means song. So if you think about the book of Psalms is really kind of like a song book filled with the songs that God's people would've sung in the Old Testament.

And so I see those—how many verses (?)—and I've often wondered “What if the song leader gets up to sing and says to everyone please turn in your scrolls to Psalm one hundred nineteen. Psalm 1-1-9. We'll sing all verses. And if it's convenient for you, if you would please stand for the duration of this song...”

I just wonder how many of the Israelite teenagers would've be like “Aaaaaaaaaah.”

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. But aside from being super-long, does anybody know anything else about it? Check this out. Just scan through here with me...it's all about how much this person loves the Word of God, the laws of God, the precepts, the commandments, the promises, etc. It's all about the Word of God.

We read in Psalm 119:97 Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.

In verse 20 My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times.

119:11 I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

119:162 I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil.

He's describing one of those moments when you were reading the Bible and you were like, "Whoa! I've never seen that before! It's like discovering buried treasure.

119:131 I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments.

And I don't, but have you ever been so thirsty that you were panting like a dog? I've never been THAT thirsty. I've seen it in the movies where someone is like in the desert or something and they're so thirsty they're panting "Water!"

But what's the thought there? The writer is saying he is so thirsty for God's commandments that he's panting. It's like he's dying of thirst for God's Word, like a drink of cold water in the desert.

And I read those verses and I have to ask myself, what about me? What about you? Do you need God's Word that much? Is it really your meditation all the day? Is your soul consumed at all times with longing for God's rules for your life? Do you rejoice in God's Word like you discovered buried treasure? Do you pant for His commandments?

Think back to what made Pistol Pete so good. What was it that made Pistol Pete so good?...

Well, obviously he had talent. He was 6'5" so that helps, right? So he had the natural talent, and he had a passion for basketball. But he didn't *just have natural talent* and he didn't *just have passion*. He didn't just say, "Well, I'm Pistol Pete. I'm 6 foot 5 and I'm passionate about basketball."

No, he spent time with the basketball. 20,000 hours between the ages of 5-17!!! You do a little math on that: Do you realize that over the course of 13 years he would've had to play basketball EVERY SINGLE DAY for over 4 hours to do that! That's crazy! 20,000 hours?!? 20,000 hours playing basketball.

...Nowadays our video games keep track now of how many hours we've been playing them. I'm ashamed of many hours I've spent playing games. That little ticker is depressing. As if I need the reminder, "Congratulations, loser! You've wasted 14 days 3 hours and 51 minutes of your life on this game, and you're never going to get them back."

Maybe it's time we take our time seriously.

How many hours have you spent watching YouTube videos? How many hours have you spent on Facebook? How many hours have you spent playing sports? How many hours I've spent on your phone?

And so here we are doing the things that are really important to us, because Jesus says "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." And so if you want to see what you really treasure, just look at the things you spend your time doing.

"Well, this week I spent 22 hours and 13 minutes playing Call of Duty."

How does that compare to the time you've logged with the Word of God on any given week? How much time do you spend with your Bible?

Do you read it once a day? Are we talking once a week? Once every two weeks? Are we talking just on Sundays and Wednesdays? Once a month? Maybe you're thinking "Honestly, I have no idea when the last time I read my Bible was." Or maybe thinking, "Never. I've never really read the Bible."

Listen, I don't say any of this to make you feel terrible about yourself. I just want you to give this some thought. How much time do you spend with the Word of God?

Oh "I love the Bible! I love the Word of God! I'm a Christian!"

...What if Pistol Pete had said "I'm 6'5" and I look like a basketball player. I love basketball." But he never spent any time with the ball, how does that match up? How can you say you love playing basketball and never pick up the ball?

Yet how many of us say "Yeah, I'm a Christian! I love the Word of God!" but we never spend any time with it? How does that match up? How can we say we love the Word of God and never pick up the book.

It doesn't match up.

Do you spend time with the book?

Listen, I don't know if this hit home with anybody tonight or if it's just me. But I'd be the first to admit to you that I need to be a more a disciplined disciple instead of a more distracted one. I need to be spending more time with the Word.

This week, I want to give you purple gorilla #2. I want you to keep praying at the lunch table. I want you to keep on doing that, because what y'all are doing there is awesome! But this week, let me give you this challenge.

Try this out for the next week and see how it goes. **For the next week I want you to carry your Bible with you all around school.** When you're changing classes out in the hallway, carry it around in your hands. When you go over to your locker and change out some books, take your Bible with you. Take it with you when you go to lunch. Sit it out on your desk during class. And if you get some free time, or maybe during study hall this week, get out your Bible and read a little bit.

And again, let's all remember, please hear me loud and clear here! This isn't something you need to be doing in a showy way or in a condescending way towards others. It's not about that at all!

Make it similar to the prayer. Just make it something you do. Don't throw yourself a parade (attention, everyone, I am now going to be reading my Bible."). Just do it to let your light shine before men so that they will see you and see Jesus.

We want to have a purple gorilla kind of faith, the kind where people can look at us and easily observe that we belong to Christ.

Purple Gorillas Lesson 3:

The fish in your school

The Lesson

-Purple gorillas series: What if we had a purple gorilla kind of faith that everybody else could see? Not in a showy kind of way that would draw attention to ourselves, but in a way that would cause others to see Christ in us. Because that's really what we want! We want to show Jesus to people!

-Purple Gorilla #1: say a prayer at your lunch table.

-Purple Gorilla #2: carry your Bible around with you all day at school.

Justina Edwards: Mr. Philip I did both of the purple gorillas before my friends and I ate lunch. We read from Psalm 136:2 and then prayed.

Evie Hampton: Today was so cool! I was reading my Bible in class and I look over and another kid was reading his Bible. When class was over I was talking to him and he said that his mom was going through a tough time and they haven't been to church in a while. He seemed impressed that someone from school he didn't know that well was willing to pray for him."

Devin Aguiar: I took my Bible to school today. This guy asked me why I had my Bible. I looked at him and simply asked: Why don't you have yours? =)

Mark Kathryn Willoughby: I have like a morphed purple gorilla story. You know my prayer wall that I have? I write all those requests on the front of my Bible so it travels with me. Today when I had my Bible out, a lot of people kept asking me what the names were, and when I told them, they told me things they wanted me to pray for. Also I have gotten many texts and random messages on Twitter saying "You're the one with the prayer wall, right?" Everybody wants to be prayed for.

Brenna Yap: I had my Bible on the table while we were at lunch and a girl from my table picked it up. She said, "It's a Bible." I told her "Yeah." And she said she used to bring hers every day but kids on her bus made fun of her and took it all of the time. But she said she might start bringing it again.

Annette Law: Today at school a few people asked me why I was carrying my Bible, but that wasn't what got me. What got me was how much I thought of God today. Seeing my Bible all day long helped me to watch if I gossiped and how I appeared to others. I thought it was nice to always have God on my mind and be able to reflect and think about him so often today.

Let's put all the pieces together tonight...

How many of you like to fish? How many of you would admit I don't know how to fish?

Those of you who know how to fish, I want you to imagine that you took one of these other guys who doesn't know how to fish with you on your next fishing trip.

And so you show up with your tackle box and your poles and your baits, and your lures, your hooks, and your weights, all that fishing gear.

And the other guy shows up and what do you think he brings? Nothing.

No big deal. You came prepared. You had a feeling that would happen.

And so you get out there on the pier. And as you can imagine the other guy doesn't really have a clue what's going on. And so you bait the hook, and you cast the line for them, hand them the fishing rod, and walk away. "I'll be back in a second," you say.

And so for the time being everything is going well (because nothing is happening), when all of a sudden this person who knows absolutely nothing about fishing feels a little tug on their line.

They say, "What in the world was that?" They feel it again.

They panic. I don't know what's going on. And they don't have any idea how to reel in a fish! Nobody's ever taught them how to do that. They've never thought through this part! They don't even know where to begin! All they know is that somebody handed them a rod with some bait on it.

And so they panic, unsure of what to do, and after a short time (what happens, fishermen?) the fish is gone. It makes off with the bait.

In Matthew 4 starting in verse 16 And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 17 Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." 18 They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

I want you to think about what's been happening the last two weeks in your life, and in this series. We challenged you to say a prayer at the lunch table. And then we asked you to carry around your Bibles with you from place to place.

It's similar to Matthew 4:17 where Jesus says "I will make you become fishers of men."

It's kind of like Jesus says, "Go fish!" And these past two weeks we've challenged you to go fish. Go find people who are looking for Jesus.

And in a way, it's like we handed you a rod (prayer) and a baited hook (the Word of God).

So here you are holding the fishing rod. And the bait's just kind of sitting out there. And there's all these fish in your school (pun intended) and they're seeing what you're doing.

And chances are if you've had the courage to do what we've been asking you to do, you've experienced this on some level. All these fish are swimming by. Some of them don't notice your prayers. Some of them do. Some of them don't notice the Bible in your hand. Some of them do.

And then this is where it gets interesting: somebody asks you about it.

You feel the tug on your fishing rod. You've got a bite. And if you've never been fishing like this before, if you've never been a fisher of men, if you've never tried leading people to Jesus before, this fishing thing is a little bit scary.

Because now you've got someone interested in what you're putting out there: your faith.

And so they ask you things like: Hey, what were you doing before you started eating lunch today?

Were you just praying? Or when did you start praying at the lunch table?

Or why do you pray before you eat?

Why do you carry your Bible around with you all day at school?

What is that book you're reading?

Is there some reason that you're reading the Bible right now?

I'm not asking you a show of hands, but have you gotten questions like that these last two weeks?

Listen guys, conversations lead to conversions!

Can you repeat that? Conversations lead to conversions. Think about how true that that is. The conversations that you have with your friends will either (A) lead to them to Christ (B) will turn them off to Christ.

Look at 1 Peter 3:13-17. And in what we're about to read, you're going to see the idea of persecution. You know persecution means? It's the idea of being mistreated for what you believe. To do harm towards someone else for what they stand for.

In the New Testament, Christians had a dramatically different version of persecution than what we would experience in 2013. Usually, persecution to us means something along the lines of someone laughing at us for what we believe. Being made fun of for your faith.

In the New Testament, persecution often meant death...suddenly being laughed at doesn't sound so bad, does it?!

Look at these words though from 1 Peter 3. I know the persecution is different, but check this out: it's amazing how much you'll identify with these words, especially as they pertain to the way people at school may treat you.

1 Peter 3:13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

15 But sanctify (set apart) the Lord God in your hearts,

And again there's the idea of the faith like a purple gorilla. Where we would set God apart in our hearts.

and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.

You know what that means?

It means we need to be ready for pop quizzes.

Am I the only one who hates pop quizzes? I know I'm not alone. Do you hate pop quizzes? Why?

Because the teacher can spring one on you at any given moment. They basically say, "Be ready. I'm not telling you when it's going to happen, but it's going to happen. So be ready!"

Listen, opportunities to share your faith are like pop quizzes.

You're not going to have any way of knowing when that time will be. You'll be sitting there just trying to do your thing for God and live like him, with a rod in your hands and a baited hook in the water.

And suddenly you'll get one of those pop quiz questions.

"Hey, you're like one of the only people at my school that doesn't cuss. Why don't you cuss?"

"What's your church like?"

“I’ve been thinking about being baptized lately. What do you think I need to do?”

“Why do you carry your Bible around at school?”

“Why do you pray at the lunch table?”

You’re on Facebook or Twitter and you see someone post something about how they’re ready to end it. Or how nobody cares about them. Or how terrible of a day that they’ve had.

Every one of those situations presents you with a natural opportunity to share a message of HOPE!

You see how natural it would be in those conversations to talk about Jesus? To talk about God? To talk about His church? To talk about the hope that He’s given you in your life?

Conversations lead to conversions.

I want to tell you about Purple Gorilla #3, get y’all to do a little thinking and get some audience participation, and then we’ll conclude.

Sometimes I share this with new Christians who’ve just been baptized. I tell them that there are three simple things they need to try to do every day.

1. I tell them “Every day say something to God.” (that’s prayer)
2. I tell them “Every day let God say something to you.” (that’s reading the Bible)

And let me just stop there and point this out. Purple Gorilla #1 was what? #2 was what?

3. Here’s purple gorilla #3: Every day say something about God. (that’s evangelism)

What if I said, “Hey, guys. New contest! Every time that you talk about God to someone at school this week you get \$5. Anytime you mention God or Christ, or His church, \$5 per mention. If we had a contest like that, would you do it?”

How many of us would love to be in a contest like that? And we think, “Man! There’s no telling how much money I could have by the end of the week!”

You’d be walking up to people: “Hey, I just want to invite you to church (1) this week. We’re going to be talking about Jesus (2). It’ll be at the Mt. Juliet church (3) of Christ (4).” Cha-ching. \$20.

You might write someone a note about their faith and you might share Jesus with them that way. You’d be hitting up people on Facebook. You’d copy and paste the message to different people at school. “There’s \$5, \$50, \$100, \$300, \$1000...”

And some of you might get really creative. You might grab a megaphone and run up and down and the halls like some street corner preacher in New York City asking people over and over “Do you know Jesus? Do you know Jesus?” (Some of you are very excited about my fake contest, I can tell!)

But what if I told you that the contest actually started last Wednesday and ended tonight? How much money would you have? \$5? \$10? \$50? \$100? \$0?

...Listen guys, we get pumped about a contest like that, but how crazy is this—Jesus just says I’ll do you one better than the \$5 deal: eternal life is on the table. We’re talking about treasure in heaven!

Our conversations need to lead to conversions.

As we wrap up, I want to revisit that pop quiz questions idea, because I want you guys to give some thought to the way that you would answer them. I want to hear from a few of you.

What are some things you might say about the hope that is within you if someone asks you why you don't cuss?

"What's your church like?" (What might you say to point them towards hope?)

"I've been thinking about being baptized lately. What do you think I need to do?" (How might you give them hope?)

"Why do you carry your Bible around at school?" (How can you share the hope that is within you with them?)

Why do you pray at the lunch table?

You're on Facebook or Twitter and you see someone post something about how they're ready to end it. Or how nobody cares about them. Or how terrible of a day that they've had.

How might you reveal to them and offer them the hope that lies within you?

We began this series with a question: how long does it take people to figure out that you're a Christian? What if your faith stuck out like a 4 ft purple gorilla on your shoulders?

And so we encouraged you to pray out in the open at your school. Then we encouraged you to take your Bible with you all over school. And now the final piece I want you to add, talk about God this week.

And by the way, isn't it cool how things as simple as prayer and Bible study can even be evangelism when you take them into your school? Those two things stand out like giant purple gorillas!

This week, when the opportunity presents itself, be ready to talk about the hope that is within you. Because conversations lead to what? Conversions.

Think about how incredible it would be, if every single person here prayed, carried their Bible around and read it, and talked about God every chance you got, and all of this happened at your school for one week?

Let's not just dream about how incredible that could be. Let's do it!

Guys, a rod in your hands, and a baited hook won't do you any good if you don't know what to do when the fish bite.

We MUST, I repeat, we MUST give some serious thought about what we are going to say when we have an opportunity to give a defense of the hope that is within us.

Let's make sure our conversations lead to conversions.