

The Invitation to Hope

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[A NOTE FOR YOU, THE PREACHER]

- **Night 2:** The Invitation to Hope
- This sermon presents the topic of salvation. It identifies (1) the fundamental sin problem that we inherit from Adam and Eve, (2) the solution that God has provided through the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, and (3) the response by which we partake of the free gift of salvation.
- For the opening illustration, you will share about how life changed during the pandemic of 2020. In this way, you will be introducing how the world changed after the sin of Adam and Eve. Share some life experiences that demonstrate how things changed (school, work, family, etc.).
- Tonight, you will be making an appeal using a decision card. You will need to coordinate with the leaders of your church to ensure that the cards are passed out at the appropriate time. Let them know that when the picture of Jesus is shown on slide 75, they are to hand out the decision cards, primarily to the visitors.
- In slide 77, you will go through the decision card and encourage the visitors to fill it out as they make their decision for Jesus. Then, have everyone stand for prayer, and ask those who filled out any part of the card to bring their card to the front.
- After the meeting, make sure to look through the decision cards that were handed in, and pray for each individual. You will also want to review the cards with the pastor or elder and arrange visitations accordingly.
- Finally, as you prepare for tonight's message, take time to pray earnestly for God to lead individuals to make decisions for Him tonight. The message of salvation is for everyone, even for those who may have heard about it many times before. Pray that God will convict your own heart and enable you to preach passionately about His offer of salvation.

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- Good evening, everyone! I am glad to see you all again.
- Welcome to the second night of our series.
- Our topic this evening is “The Invitation to Hope.”
- Tonight, we will be talking about one of the most important themes of the Bible.
- But before I begin the message for tonight, I would like to introduce the message for tomorrow night.

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- The title of tomorrow's message is "Walking with Hope."

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- Several of us here know how to drive a car.
- Perhaps you remember the first time you drove, or when you began learning how to drive.
- At first it was new and perhaps even difficult.
- But then as you continued learning, it provided freedom and opportunity to travel to where you needed to go.
- We all know that there are basic rules for driving.
- There are rules for taking care of a car.
- When you follow these rules, you have freedom to drive and travel.
- But when you don't follow the rules, you put yourself in danger, and you may even put others in danger, as well.

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- In a similar way, we experience freedom when receive salvation.
- But there are basic rules and principles for a life with Jesus.

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- Join us tomorrow as we talk about "Walking with Hope," and learn the principles for a life with Jesus.

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- But now, let us begin with the message for tonight: "The Invitation to Hope."
- Let us pray and ask for God's blessing before we begin.

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- I am sure that all of us remember the pandemic of 2020.
- I remember what my life was like the week before the pandemic began.
- (Describe your own life—school/work/family, etc.—the day or two before the pandemic.)
- But then, within a few hours, everything changed.
- We entered a new world with masks and social distancing.
- Many events were canceled, and life became very different.
- Many people had questions about when life would return to normal.
- Everything had changed.

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- Last night, we learned about how sin entered our world, and how it changed everything.
- We learned about the enemy who brought selfishness and sin.
- We learned about how Satan deceived Adam and Eve, and how sin brought pain and suffering to humanity.
- When Adam and Eve sinned, everything changed.

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- Sin brought shame.
- Before sin, Adam and Eve did not feel shame.
- They were secure in their love for each other, and they enjoyed communion with God.
- But when they sinned, they felt guilty, and they tried to hide from God.

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- And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. —Genesis 3:8, NKJV.

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- Sin brought conflict.
- When God began to ask Adam about his actions, he blamed Eve.
- When God asked Eve, she blamed the serpent.
- Before sin, Adam and Eve loved each other perfectly, and they were in perfect harmony with creation.
- But sin and selfishness bring conflict.

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- We see this conflict in the children of Adam and Eve—Cain and Abel.
- As a result of the conflict between the two of them, Cain killed Abel.

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- Sin is the reason for the conflict in our families, the conflict at our work, the conflict in our countries, and the conflict in our world.

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- Sin brought suffering.
- When God spoke with Adam and Eve after their sin, He told them about the painful results that sin would bring.
- Life would be difficult. Work would be hard.
- There would be challenges in having families.
- Sin would destroy peace and bring pain to God's creation.
- Animals would become dangerous. Plants would dry up and die.

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- Finally, Sin brought death. Let us read what God told Adam in Genesis 3:19:

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- "Dust you are, and to dust you shall return." —Genesis 3:19, NKJV.
- We can also find this concept in Romans 6:23:

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- "The wages of sin is death." —Romans 6:23.

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- For many people, this seems unfair.
- Why did Adam and Eve have to die, simply because they ate the forbidden fruit?
- But when we think about it, the answer is profound.

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- By disobeying God, Adam and Eve chose selfishness and sin, and sin destroys happiness.
- God is love, and He wants to preserve peace and happiness in His universe.
- So, He has to destroy sin.

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- Yesterday, in the story of the farmer, we saw that the weeds were destroyed at the time of the harvest.
- The harvest represents the end of the world.

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- At the end of the world, Jesus will destroy sin forever. But there is a problem.
- In order to destroy sin, God needs to destroy sinners.
- But at the same time, God also desires for us to be part of His eternal kingdom of love.
- How can God be righteous and destroy sin, and at the same time be merciful and save us?

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- The answer to this problem is the plan of salvation.
- God introduced this plan after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden.

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- After Adam and Eve sinned, they realized that they were naked.
- They experienced shame.
- They tried to cover themselves with leaves, but God provided clothes for them.
- When we try to cover our guilt, our attempts are not sufficient. But God has a plan to free us from the shame of sin.
- Let us read what the Bible says:

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- The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. —Genesis 3:21, NIV.
- These clothes were made from the skins of animals.
- Animals had to die so that Adam and Eve could have clothes.
- This began the system of animal sacrifices.

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- In the days of ancient Israel, God told the Israelites to make a sanctuary.
- The Sanctuary was designed to help the Israelites understand the plan of salvation.
- Animal sacrifices were an important part of the services that happened at the sanctuary.
- They were a symbol of how God saves sinners.

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- When sinners came to the sanctuary, they were guilty. They deserved to die.
- But God told them to bring a lamb.
- The sinner placed his hands on the head of the lamb.
- The sinner confessed his sins. The guilt was transferred to the lamb.
- Then, the lamb was killed. The lamb died instead of the sinner.
- These animal sacrifices happened every day and continued for thousands of years.
- But they were only a symbol.

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- When Jesus came to this earth, He chose to be baptized at the beginning of His ministry.
- And when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to be baptized, he said,

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- “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” —John 1:29.
- Jesus lived a perfect life—He was innocent, just like the lambs that were sacrificed.
- He never sinned. He did not deserve to die.

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- The stories we read from those who knew and saw Him tell us that He was more than a usual man.
- His teachings were full of wisdom. He had a heart of compassion for all types of people.
- He lived a life of integrity and faithfulness.
- Those who knew Him said that He also performed miracles.
- As he entered certain villages and cities, people with all types of sicknesses came to him.
- By the time He left those villages, everyone was healed.
- His disciples—those who followed Him—believed that He was not just a man; they believed that He was the Son of God.
- They believed that the Old Testament prophecies pointed to the life and ministry of Jesus.

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- But there were people who did not like Jesus. They hated Him.
- The religious leaders of Israel were concerned about the popularity of Jesus.
- His life and teachings were based on the principles of the Word of God.
- But the religious leaders saw that His teachings were different than theirs.
- They had traditions and rules that were not found in Scripture.
- The religious leaders were afraid that they would lose their power when people followed Jesus.
- So, they planned to kill Him.

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- One evening when Jesus was in Jerusalem, one of His disciples—Judas—betrayed Him.
- The religious leaders gave Judas money when he told them where Jesus would be that night.
- Jesus was captured, and after an unjust trial, He was condemned to death.

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- He was beaten until people could no longer recognize Him.
- He was led through the streets of the city to the hill of Calvary.

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- There, He was killed in public like a criminal; He was crucified.
- The only person who never sinned, the only person who never deserved to die, suffered upon the cross of Calvary. He experienced a horrible death.
- But why did Jesus die? The answer from Scripture is clear:

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- Christ died for our sins. —1 Corinthians 15:3.
- On that dark day on Mount Calvary, when Jesus was crucified, He died in our place.
- Although His disciples did not understand it, Jesus knew that He must die for our sins.

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- When He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, He felt the weight of every sin that everyone has ever done.
- He was considered guilty for every sin and crime of humanity.
- He had to face the justice of God against sin, so that those who repent and believe could be forgiven.
- Jesus chose to face suffering, shame, and the death of the cross so that you and I could have the opportunity to be forgiven.

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- Sin causes separation from God.
- Jesus felt this separation when He cried, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?”
- Jesus felt this separation so that none of us would have to.
- Jesus felt this separation so that we could be forgiven and become children of God.
- The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21:

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- “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them...

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- God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

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- Because Jesus died, our sins can be forgiven, and God considers us righteous.
- We don't need to continue in shame. We can have peace as children of God.
- The Bible says in Romans 5:1:

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- “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

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- Jesus made the provision for us to be saved. All we need to do is respond and receive this gift.

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- How do we receive the gift of salvation? The Bible is clear:

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- Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. —Acts 16:31, NKJV.
- Again, we read in Romans 10:9:

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- If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. —Romans 10:9, ESV.

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- The Bible tells us to believe in Jesus.
- We cannot save ourselves.
- We must believe that Jesus died in our place.
- We must believe that Jesus rose from the dead, and that He lives to intercede for us.
- We must believe that He is Lord, and we must choose to depend on Him for our salvation.

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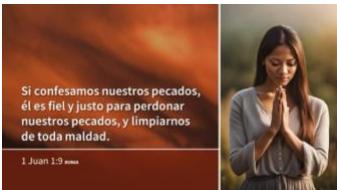
- There is nothing we can do to earn our salvation.
- Our attempts to be righteous cannot cancel the guilt of our sin.
- The Bible is clear:

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- For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. —Ephesians 2:8-9, NKJV.
- We cannot save ourselves. We must depend on Jesus. We must believe.

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- The Bible also tells us to confess our sins. God makes a special promise in 1 John 1:9—

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- If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. —1 John 1:9, NKJV.
- We cannot make excuses for our sins.
- We must accept the fact that we are sinners, and that we need the forgiveness of God.

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- And when we confess our sins, we can be confident that God has forgiven us.
- This is what it means to believe. We trust His promise. We believe what He said.
- Some people say, “My sins are too bad. I have done so many wrong things. It is not possible for God to forgive me.”
- But if we say this, we are saying that God is a liar.

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- We must believe in Jesus. We must trust His promise.
- We must depend on His grace.
- If you confess your sins, you are forgiven. You can have peace.

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- There is one more thing the Bible tells us to do in order to receive salvation.

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- We must believe in Jesus,

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- we must confess our sins,

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- and we must repent. Let us read Acts 3:19:

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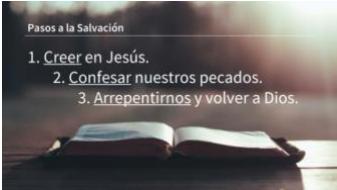
- Repentance means “to turn around.”
- We turn away from sin, and we turn to God.

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- There are some people who do not have a problem with believing in Jesus;
- They do not have a problem with confessing their sins;
- But they do not want to give up their sins and turn to God.
- The Bible tells us to surrender to Jesus. It tells us to turn from our sins.

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- Maybe tonight you feel that your sins are too powerful.
- Maybe you feel that you cannot walk away from your sins.
- But there is good news. Jesus has the power to give you victory!
- Repentance is a gift from Him.
- If you ask Him, if you believe in His power, if you confess your weakness, if you choose to belong to Him, He can give you His strength.

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- These are the steps to eternal life.
- These are the steps to peace with God.
- We believe in Jesus, we confess our sins, and we repent and turn to Him.

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- When we receive Jesus by faith, we receive the gift of eternal life. Notice with me what 1 John 5:12-13 says,

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- 1 John 5:12-13 says, “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”
- “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life”
- The text doesn’t say “you HAD eternal life in the past,” or even “you WILL have eternal life in the future.” It says “you HAVE eternal life”—right now!
- It means that today you can have eternal life.
- “You HAVE eternal life.” When? NOW!
- We can experience salvation NOW!
- When I accept Jesus Christ, the condemnation, the anxiety, and the guilt leave.
- Jesus comes to live in my heart. I belong to Him, and He is my Savior.

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- Many years ago, there was a young man named Martin.
- Martin was a troubled young man.
- He had not experienced the joy of knowing Jesus.
- One day he was walking through a forest.

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- Suddenly, a storm came, and the sky was filled with lightning.
- Martin fell on his knees. He looked up and cried out, “Don’t kill me! Save me!”
- He saw the lightning in the sky; he heard the sounds of thunder.
- Martin promised, “If you protect me, I will become a priest.”
- Soon the rain stopped. The sky became clear, and the sun appeared.

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- Faithful to his promise, Martin became a priest.
- But even as a priest, he felt separated from God.
- He felt condemned. He tried to punish himself for his sins.
- But he still did not feel peace.

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- But one day, Martin began to study the book of Romans.
- He learned that salvation comes by faith in Jesus.
- He read passages like Romans 6:23,

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- For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. —Romans 6:23.

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- Martin chose to accept that gift.
 - He chose to believe that Jesus was His Savior.
 - He chose to believe that God had forgiven him.

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- While Martin was sleeping one night, he had a dream.
 - Satan appeared to him with a scroll that contained his sins.
 - These were specific sins: fraud, lies, impure thoughts.
 - Martin knew they were his own sins.
 - The devil asked him, "Are these your sins?" Martin said, "Yes."
 - The devil asked him, "Are the wages of sin death?" Martin said, "Yes."
 - The devil asked him, "Then shouldn't you die?"
 - Martin saw that the devil's hand covered the top part of the scroll.
 - The devil was hiding something.

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- Martin said to him, “Move your hand.” The devil didn’t move.
 - Martin said again, “Move your hand!” The Devil said, “No!”
 - Martin Luther said, “In the name of Christ—who wore the crown of thorns and who suffered with nails through His hands, who died on the cross for me—I order you, MOVE YOUR HAND!”
 - Satan trembled when Martin mentioned the name of Christ and fled.

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- Under his hand it said: The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses Martin from all his sins.

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- My dear friend, the blood of Jesus can cleanse you tonight.
- When you trust Jesus, you can experience joy, peace, and forgiveness.
- There is a precious promise that many of us know.
- It is found in John 3:16. Let us read it together:

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- For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
—John 3:16.
- Note the word “whoever.” It does not say Black or White, African or Asian.
- It says, “Whoever”—this means everyone, including you and me.
- This peace can be yours.
- Freedom from the guilt of condemnation can be yours.
- Eternal life can be yours.

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- Can you resist the amazing love of God?
- Do you understand the sacrifice He made for you?
- He left the glory of heaven and came to this sinful earth.
- He lived a perfect life for you.
- He suffered and died for you.
- He rose from the grave for you.
- And today He lives; He offers you forgiveness of your sins; He offers you eternal life.

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- How is your relationship with Christ?
- He gave everything for you. He poured out His blood for you.
- He offers forgiveness and peace. He offers freedom from guilt.
- Tonight, Jesus wants to put your name where Martin's name was.
- He wants to say, “The blood of Jesus cleanses Roberto or Martha from all their sins.” “The blood of Jesus cleanses Maria from all her sins.”
- The blood of Jesus was shed for you.

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- Tonight, you can claim that forgiveness for yourself by faith. You can believe the Word of God. You can trust that God has forgiven you.
- I'm going to ask _____ to sing the hymn titled "All to Jesus I Surrender" (another special music related to the sermon is also acceptable).
- [If there is no one singing a special music, just continue on to the next slide.]
- Before they sing, you have received a card. [Ask if every visitor has a card.]

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- Don't forget to put your name. I want to pray for your decision. Also let us know your address and phone number so we can contact you or visit you if you wish. Let's read this card together.
- - "I confess that I am a sinner and ask God's forgiveness." If you want God to forgive you for your sins, mark His card.
- - "I believe Jesus died for my sins." If you believe God died to pay for your sins, mark your card.
- - "I rejoice in the salvation God gives me." If you are grateful to God for the forgiveness and salvation Jesus offers us, mark your card.
- - "I want to receive free literature." If you would like to receive a book to learn more about Jesus, mark your card.

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- Before we close tonight, there's one more thing I'd like to have you do. While _____ sings the next stanzas, I ask that you come forward. I would like to collect your cards and pray a special prayer for you right now. Jesus said, "Whoever confesses me before men, him I will confess before My Father who is in heaven." Don't worry about what others think. Come forward!
- [While the singer is singing, say:]
- If you want to be forgiven, come to the front with us.
- If you are a believer, invite a friend and come together.
- Tonight, Jesus is calling you. He loves you and He wants to do many wonderful things in your life. Will you give your heart, your life, your love to Him tonight? Come forward. Don't be afraid. Jesus says, "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
- [PRAYER OF CONSECRATION]
- [Immediately after the prayer, say the following lines:]
- You may now have the assurance that all your past sins have been forgiven. Isn't it wonderful to know that we have been reconciled with God? Your name has been written in the Book of Life. Please leave the card to the ushers at the door. You may return to your seats.