

# ALLEY LG – March 12-13<sup>th</sup>

## The Greatest Story Ever Told

**Bible Story:** The Greatest Story Ever Told (Crucifixion) • *John 18-19 (Supporting: Matthew 27; Luke 23)*

**Bottom Line:** Whatever happens, remember God is still at work.

**Memory Verse:** “In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world.” *John 16:33b, NIV*

**Life App:** Hope—believing that something good can come out of something bad.

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

*Note: The boxes for the Bible story should be pre-set on stage and covered with a large sheet. The “A” and “B” tables for the Opener should also be pre-set.*

**SFX:** Play high-energy music as kids enter.

### Opener

**HOST:** “Hey, everybody! I’m so glad you could join us today. This month, we are talking about HOPE!”

### CG: Hope Slide

“Hope is believing that something good can come out of something bad. Hope means that you KNOW God is in control, even when life is looking dark and uncertain. You believe that God sees the bigger picture. You choose to **trust Him, no matter what**. Hope can light up your and give you the strength you need to carry on.

“Now, sometimes things go your way, and sometimes they don’t. In fact, in today’s story, we’re going to talk about Jesus’ friends, the disciples, and how things didn’t really go down the way they had in mind. But whether they knew it or not, there was always hope!”

“Today I’d like to kick things off with a little game where things may—or may not—go according to plan. I am going to face off against one (*air quotes*) ‘lucky’ contestant. I’m looking for someone with no fear and no allergies ... and a strong stomach. Any competitors up for the challenge?”

*Bring up two kids or one kid and a Small Group Leader.*

“All right! [Contestants’ names], thanks for playing. This game is very simple. You are going to taste-test three different pairs of drinks. With every two drinks, one is extremely delicious. One is extremely disgusting. But they LOOK the same ... so the choice is up to you! You will get to decide which one you want, and the other contestant will get the other one. You’ve got to stand behind this line (*point to the tape line on the floor*) so you can’t use your sense of smell to make your decision. Make sense? (To

*audience*) Audience, are you ready? *(Pause.)* All right! Let the taste test begin!

*Bring out the cups with sparkling water and with Sprite.  
They set one on the "A" table and one on the "B" table, far  
away from the contestants.*

"Taste test number one. Sparkling water ... or Sprite. [Contestant's name], when you're ready, choose either A or B.

*Contestant chooses one and Host brings the cups.*

"Okay, [contestant's name], you have chosen drink [A or B], which means [SGL leader] gets [A or B]. Take a big gulp and see who's the lucky Sprite drinker.

*SGL and contestant take a drink. Have some fun with the  
reactions.*

"Amazing! And now for taste test number two.

*Bring out the cups of apple juice and pickle juice and set  
them on the tables.*

"Apple juice ... or pickle juice. [Contestant's name], when you're ready, choose either A or B.

*Contestant chooses one and Host brings the cups.*

"Okay, [contestants' names], take a big drink and see which one is apple-licious or pickle-licious!

*SGL and contestant take a drink. Have some fun with the  
reactions.*

"All right! This is really disgusting. And now for the grand finale ... taste test number three!

*Bring out the cups of chocolate syrup and dark beef gravy  
and set them on the tables.*

"Will it be chocolate syrup ... or beef gravy? [Contestant's name], when you're ready, choose either A or B.

*Contestant chooses one.*

"All right, [contestants names], who has chocolate and who has the liquid meat?

*SGL and contestant take a drink. Have some fun with the  
reactions.*

"Ahhhhh! That was crazy! How about a big hand for our contestants, [contestants names]? (*Give them the ice cream gift card.*) You deserve some ice cream! See, something good CAN come out of something bad!

## Worship

### SETTING UP THE STORY

*Note: The boxes for the Bible story should be pre-set on stage and covered with a large sheet.*

**FX:** *Lower the lights in the ALLEY*

*Have a flameless candle for the Host to hold as they read the Crucifixion of Christ.*

*Host – really drive home the emotions of Jesus story when you are teaching the lesson. This lesson hinges on your commitment to the emotions.*

**HOST:** "Last week we talked about Jesus and the disciples sharing one last meal together during Passover. After Jesus and His friends ate the Passover meal together, they walked toward the Garden of Gethsemane. Along the way, Jesus promised that even though things were about to get dark, God would make everything right in the end. In fact, what He told them is our memory verse this month.

**CG:** *Memory Verse Slide*

"In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world,' John 16:33b. (*NirV*)

"Jesus and His friends entered the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. And within a short time, soldiers arrived to arrest Jesus! Of course, none of this was a surprise to Jesus, so He approached the men. Here's how that conversation went. (*Read John 18:4-5a*) 'Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to him. So he went out and asked them, "Who do you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said.' (*NirV*)

*Turn on the light behind picture #1 (rope).*

"Jesus was tied up and taken to the high priest. His friends scattered, though Peter and another disciple snuck along behind until they got into the courtyard. Three times, bystanders accused Peter of being Jesus' friend, and three times Peter denied it."

### BEFORE PILATE

**HOST:** "Even one of Jesus' closest friends had pretended not to know Him. Nearly everyone had abandoned Him. Then, Jesus was put on trial. People spoke lies about Him. The religious leaders twisted His words. The trial was completely unfair. But the high priest sent Jesus to be punished by the Roman governor, Pilate.

“Pilate came out to talk to the men who had brought Jesus to him. He asked them what charges they were bringing against Jesus. In other words, what bad things did they think Jesus had done? They told Pilate that Jesus had committed crimes, even though He really hadn’t.

“Pilate questioned Jesus directly. He asked Jesus if He was the king of the Jews. Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not from this world. Jesus went on to say (*read John 18:37b*), ‘You say that I am a king. In fact, that’s the reason I was born. I was born and came into the world to be a witness to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of truth listens to me.’ (*NIRV*)

“Pilate could find nothing that Jesus had done wrong. Despite that, he had soldiers whip Jesus and then went out to address the religious leaders. ‘I find no reason to send him to die,’ Pilate told them. Then the soldiers brought Jesus out before the religious leaders once again. They had dressed Him in a purple robe and pressed a crown of thorns down on His head.

*Turn on the light behind picture #2 (crown of thorns).*

“‘Crucify him! Crucify him!’ the crowd cried out when they saw Jesus. (*John 19:36, NIRV*)

“Pilate didn’t want to make the crowd angry or get in trouble with his Roman bosses. So he went along with what they wanted. He sentenced Jesus to die and handed Him over to the soldiers.”

## **CRUCIFIXION**

**HOST:** “Jesus had to drag His own cross along the dusty road.

*Turn on the light behind picture #3 (cross).*

“The soldiers led Him to a hill outside the city called Golgotha. A few of Jesus’ friends struggled along behind, including His mother Mary, several other women, and John. They were hardly able to watch as a soldier nailed Jesus’ hands and feet to the cross and lifted it high into place.

“Two other men—men who had actually committed crimes—were crucified on either side of Jesus. Jesus had done nothing wrong, but that didn’t matter to the chief priests and officials who wanted Him dead.

“A soldier posted a sign on Jesus’ cross that Pilate had prepared. It read ‘Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.’ (*John 19:19, NIRV*)

*Turn on the light behind picture #4 (sign).*

“Nearby, a group of religious leaders kept careful distance from both the soldiers and Jesus’ cross. They mocked Jesus, shouting things like, ‘Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God,’ and, ‘He saved others. ... But he can’t save himself.’ (*Matthew 27:40, 42*) Others joined in mocking Jesus too.

“Even one of the lawbreakers, hanging on his own cross, gathered enough breath to laugh at Jesus. (*Read Luke 23:39.*) ‘Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself! Save us!’ he mocked. But the second lawbreaker called out to the first one (*read Luke 23:41-43*), ‘Don’t you have any respect for God? ... We

are being punished fairly. ... But this man hasn't done anything wrong.' Then he turned to Jesus and said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And Jesus answered the man, 'Today, you will be with me in paradise.' (NIRV)

"As Jesus hung on the cross, the soldiers took His clothes and divided them up, even rolling dice to see who would get His inner robe.

*Turn on the light behind picture #5 (dice).*

"Jesus' mother was still there, watching this all unfold. Jesus saw her and saw John. He said to His mother, 'Dear woman, here is your son.' And He said to John, 'Here is your mother.' (John 19:26, 27, NIRV) And from that time on, John took care of Mary as though she were his own mother, just as Jesus had asked."

### **JESUS DIES**

**HOST:** "Soon, deep darkness covered the land, even though it was the middle of the day. Jesus knew that God was still at work, but He must have felt completely alone. He even cried out to His Father, God.

"My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' He struggled to breathe, His throat dry and gritty with dust. 'I am thirsty,' He called out. (John 19:28, NIRV)

"One of the soldiers hoisted up a sponge dipped in vinegar on the end of a stick.

*Turn on the light behind picture #6 (sponge).*

"Jesus took a sip of the bitter liquid and choked it down. Now everything He had come to do was complete. Listen to what He says. In John 19:30, we have His last words recorded for us. (Read from the Bible.) 'It is finished,' (NIRV) were His last words. Slowly, He lowered His head and took one last, rasping breath. Then ... He died."

*Turn off the flame on the candle that the Host is holding*

### **WRAPPING UP THE STORY**

**HOST:** "Slowly, the soldiers and religious leaders shuffled away. Jesus' friends were left alone in the dim light, the dry desert wind whipping against their faces. Their friend, the Man who they believed came from God, was dead. They couldn't see how God could bring any good from this. But in the darkness ...

*Throw the thin sheet back over the boxes. There should just be a faint glow of the cross behind the sheet.*

"... God was still at work.

**FX: Bring the Lights in the ALLEY back up**

**HOST:** “Jesus could have saved himself. But He didn’t. And His friends must have felt so alone. They must have felt like all was lost.

“But we know that Jesus HAD to die. It was God’s plan all along. The Bible says (*read John 3:16*), ‘God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.’ (NIV)

“We sin. We do wrong things that go against what God wants us to do. And God is perfect, so unfortunately, our sin separates us from Him. BUT God loves us so much that He sent us Jesus to die on the cross and take the punishment for our sin. Jesus forgives all of our sins and washes them all away. We’re perfectly clean! And once our sins have been wiped clean, we can come close to God and have a relationship with Him that will never end. That’s REALLY good news, guys. It’s the best news ever!

“And we also know the end of the story. We know that Jesus didn’t STAY dead, and that’s what we get to celebrate at Easter! But at the time, the disciples didn’t know any of that. All they knew was that Jesus, the Man who they believed had come from God, was dead.

They needed to remember the truth of our Bottom Line for today.

**CG: Bottom Line Slide**

**[Bottom Line]** “Whatever happens, remember God is still at work.

“Let’s pray.”

### Pray

**STORYTELLER:** “God, thank You for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to die on the cross for us. We know that He gave up His life to take care of our sin problem, so that we could have a relationship with You forever, and we are so thankful! It must have been so dark and scary for Jesus’ friends to see Him suffer and die. And it must have been awful for Jesus to die too. But thank You for this great reminder that You were still at work even then, just like You’re still at work in our lives today. Help us to always find our hope in You. We love You and we ask these things in Jesus’ name, amen.”