

Alley Rundown - November 4 & 5, 2017

Bible Story: Keep Psalm and be Thankful (A Psalm of Thanksgiving) • *Psalm 100:1-5*

Key Question: What are you thankful for?

Bottom Line: Celebrate what God has done.

Memory Verse: “Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus.” *1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIRV*

CONNECT TIME: Photo-Booth

(ALL Leaders participate, at the beginning of service time (5-7 minutes))

NOTE: *You’ll need a cell phone that takes pictures that can be viewed immediately, and a photographer.*

“We are kicking off a brand-new month in the greatest church environment this town . . . NAE . . . this state . . . NAE . . . this *country* has EVER SEEN! (*Allow for overwhelming response.*) We call this place “*The Alley*”. And to commemorate this moment in time, I feel like taking a few pictures. Is everybody ok with us taking a few photos? (*Allow response.*) Good!”

“But I want these pictures to be different from the ‘duck face pose’ picture I see all over Instagram. (*do a ‘duck face’.*) Those may be great for a normal day, but today we want to refocus our images and make them a little more special.”

“This is how our photo session will go . . . we need everyone to circle up with his or her small group. We will give the room a three-second countdown, and a theme will appear on the screens. Your job is to assume the said pose as quickly as you can with your entire small group. If your group is the last group to collectively get into the pose, your group will be eliminated from our photo session. Our esteemed photographer will be looking through the lens, taking the pictures, and letting me know who was the last group to freeze for the camera. Make sense? (*Allow response.*) Excellent. Then please give a warm and rowdy *ALLEY* welcome to our photographer!”

Photographer comes on stage. Leader with a phone to take pictures.

“Everybody ready? Let the commemorating begin! Here we go – one, two, three . . .”

Leader gives a three-second countdown between each of the poses. When the pose appears on the screens, the small groups assume their positions as quickly as possible. Leader will need to help watch for the last small group to get into a frozen pose. When the last group to pose has been identified, they should sit out the rest of the game.

CG: Game Slide 1: Soaring Eagle Pose

CG: Game Slide 2: Stealth Ninja Pose

CG: Game Slide 3: Creepy Clown Pose

CG: Game Slide 4: Pyramid Pose

CG: Game Slide 5: Football Pose

“Wow! That was fantastic! Some of you have a real knack for posing for pictures! Congrats to our winning small group! You know where to look and know how to pose . . . quickly! It’s a talent . . . not sure how it will pay off in life but, hey, a talent *is* a talent. How about we all stand up and have one more pose before I get off this stage? Ready? One – two – three . . .”

CG: Game Slide 6: Singing Diva Pose

“You are all naturals! Great job Alley! Let’s get started with Large Group today!”

(Transition to Large Group area as necessary)

(NOTE: *As this is November, Thanksgiving break is at the end of November. Talk about anticipating the holiday break, what you can’t wait to eat, what you’re thankful for, etc.) Tell them how excited you are that they’re there and briefly run through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what’s happening.*

“Thanksgiving. That most wonderful time of the year! Or is that Christmas . . . either way, celebrating Thanksgiving is pretty great, don’t you think? I mean, any holiday that involves needing to wear stretchy sweatpants because of all the food I’ll consume until I slip into a turkey-induced coma on the couch is a holiday worth celebrating in my book. Not to mention, of course, that we get an entire holiday all about saying thanks. But Thanksgiving is definitely not the *only* holiday about giving thanks. In your groups, put your heads together. You have one minute to brainstorm holidays that are all about showing gratitude to other people. Ready? GO!”

Allow groups about a minute to discuss holidays we celebrate that say “thank you” to a group of people. Once groups finish, allow a couple of groups to share what they brainstormed.

“Those are great. Yeah! We have *(Mention actually holidays they said)* Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Veteran’s Day, Memorial Day, President’s Day, and probably a few others are all days we say thanks. But why do we do that? WHY do we set aside special days to show others gratitude? *(Allow response.)*

"I like to think it's because people like me would totally forget to say 'thanks' without them. It's not that I don't appreciate my mom, dad, or—you know—the presidents—because I definitely do. I mean, without mom, I'm pretty sure Taco Tuesday would have extended into Taco Wednesday, Taco Thursday, Taco Friday . . . without her, I probably would have gotten sick of tacos in a month. TACO 'bout a travesty, right?! Thanks, Mom, for helping foster my love for tacos in a responsible way . . . and for always having extra guacamole!"

"The truth is that I think if everyone in this room is being honest, I'm not the only one who forgets to say thanks. In fact, I'm pretty sure we all face moments when we know we're supposed to say thanks, but for one reason or another, we don't. Or maybe we're so focused on ourselves that we're completely oblivious that someone is helping us in the first place."

"People do awesome stuff for us all the time, but we often fail to show our appreciation . . . even with something as simple as saying, 'Thanks.' Music teachers who take the time to teach you new music, your parents who make your lunch, your coach who helps you learn new skills on the field . . . but when was the last time you really said thanks to *any* of them?"

"We could say 'thanks' any time we want to the people in our lives, but people created special holidays just to remind us to be thankful for them. But did you know that creating special days to say thanks is something people have been doing for thousands of years. Even God's people as far back as the Old Testament set aside special days to remember all God did for them. And that's exactly what I want us to do today. Let's take some time to pause and reflect on all that God has done for us. More often than not, God also gets left off our appreciation lists even though He is the ultimate Provider. Let's go through some of what God has done in our first episode of re:Focus..."

CG: WEEK 1 Lesson Video

"For many in this room, you've heard what God has done for you. You've heard stories of God's love, grace, and mercy many times in your lives. I bet that for some of you the images behind me weren't a surprise. Many of us hear God's Big Story so often that we start to take it for granted. But when you stop and think about what God has been doing since the very beginning of time, you can't help but be blown away with gratitude. Yet, how often do we stop what we're doing and refocus long enough to say thanks to God?"

"In the Bible, we have a collection of song lyrics people sang to express their thankfulness to God. One of them is a call to worship. The writer reminds us to take time and say thanks.

"As I read Psalm 100, think about how you can take time out and say thanks to God for all that He's done for you.

Open Bible and read Psalm 100:1-5

Shout for joy to the LORD, everyone on earth. Worship the LORD with gladness. Come to him with songs of joy. Know that the LORD is God. He made us, and we belong to him. We are his people. We are the sheep belonging to his flock. Give thanks as you enter the gates of his temple. Give praise as you enter its courtyards. Give thanks to him and praise his name. The LORD is good. His faithful love continues forever. It will last for all time to come.” (NIRV)

“This is something to remember outside of church. Remember this when life seems to take a downward spiral and nothing seems to be going your way. We all BELONG to our great God who generously gives love to us. When your friends let you down or your parents disappoint you, it’s important to remember what God’s Word says. Our God is *still* good, and He has done SO much for me and you!”

“No matter what happens in life, we always have something to celebrate because of what God has done. Ultimately, everything we are thankful for is because of God . . . so give God thanks.”

“As we declare this a day to remember all that God has done, I can think of nothing better to do right now than to stand up and worship our God. Just as God’s people, the Israelites, have done long before us, and as it is written in Psalm 100, let’s come to Him with songs of joy!”

CG: What are you grateful for?

“What are you grateful for? Think about the times God has protected you, the people God has put in your life, and the ways He helps you. Before you head to Small Groups, let’s take a look at this...”

CG: Alley After Hours Invite/Promo

(DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS)