

ALLEY Rundown – August 12-14, 2023

Today's Bible Story: Do Something (We Are God's Creation) • *Ephesians 2:10*

Today's Key Question: What are you good at?

Today's Bottom Line: God created you for a purpose.

Monthly Memory Verse: *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)*

NEED: "Best of the Best" page for game

SLIDE: Theme

Good day to you, friends! When you pause to think about all the other places you could be right now, you should be very pleased with yourself! Why? Because this place, in my humble opinion, is the very BEST place to be!

"My name is [Name of Host], and welcome to The Alley! In this space, we get to learn some of the BEST truths ever, have fun with the very BEST people, join the absolute BEST small groups, and play the BEST games. In fact, this would be the BEST time to segue to the very BEST game to be played in the BEST place with the BEST people! Would anybody out there like to play a game called 'Best Of The Best'? (Allow response) Great.

SLIDE: "Best Of The Best"

"Let's all play together! To play, we need you to gather into a few Groups!

Host gives the room a moment to gather around into groups

Here's how 'Best Of The Best' will work. I'll call out an action or attribute. You'll need to survey your Group to find the person who can represent the action or attribute the BEST and send them to the stage. Once on stage, we will determine who represents the action or attribute the BEST! If your Group's representative is the BEST, your group will be awarded one million points! The Group with the most points at the end wins! Make sense? (Allow response) Great! Let's play!

AUDIO: Spotify Playlist

Host calls out actions or attributes from 'Best Of The Best Categories Page' and gives Groups a moment to select a volunteer from their Small Group to come to the stage. The individual who does it the BEST on stage is awarded points for their whole Group. This should be fun and light-hearted.

(After the game.) YES! I have played loads of games in the past, but this game is the BEST OF THE BEST! I never knew this group was so talented and funny and loud! Thanks so much for playing our game. However, there was one group that outperformed the rest and has earned the title 'Best Of The Best' champions! Let's give them our very BEST round of applause! (Allow response)

Have you ever thought it would be really cool to be someone else to have the talents of someone else? I know I have.

Communicator should tell a personal story. Use the following paragraph as an example or share it as a hypothetical situation.

For example, I remember as a little kid wanting to play basketball just like Michael Jordan! I tried. I wore his jersey and practiced on my jump shot while sticking out my tongue. I even lowered the basketball goal and worked on dunking like MJ! As hard as I tried, I never played with the same skill, creativity, and precision of the GOAT.

Maybe you've watched YouTubers come up with creative ideas for trick shots and saw them make the one that made them viral sensations! For some of you, it might have made you wish you had the talent and creativity to come up with something similar! Others in the room love to sing or dance. Maybe you've seen competitors on singing shows display amazing talents! It made you wish you could belt out the high notes and sing your own creative version of songs you love just like those on the reality shows.

If that is you, I'm so glad you are here today! Sometimes when we compare our creativity to other people's creativity, it can make us feel like we're not talented or good enough! And that feeling like you're not as good or as talented as someone else can be the worst!

But what if God created you to do something entirely different? What if your creative expression will look different than the most successful YouTuber, dancer, or artist? And how can you even discover the unique creativity God has given you? And when you find out, how can you make the most of it?

These are great questions—ones that, to be honest, we might still be asking ourselves years from now. But that doesn't mean we can't start searching for answers and finding ways to put our creativity into action now! Thankfully when we have questions like this, we have a great starting point for discovering the answers: the Bible. Remember, the Bible is a collection of books, letters, and poetry that God inspired people to write so other people can learn about the amazing life God has for us through Jesus. Let's head there now and see what we can discover together.

VIDEO: The SO and So Show (14:41)

When Paul wrote the letter to the church of Ephesus, the truth of what he wrote wasn't only for those early followers of Jesus. They are true for you and me, too. Let's take one more look at Ephesians 2:10.

SLIDE: Memory Verse

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

God wants you to use your creativity to do great things for others! For example, let's say you love dancing. Your parents have allowed you to take ballet, tap, jazz, and hip-hop. You love dance so much you dream of new dances for any song you hear. When your Small Group Leader recognizes your gift of dance, she asks if you would be interested in coming up with motions to new worship songs for younger kids at the church! This uses your gift of creativity to help others engage in worship! Pretty cool, right?

Maybe you absolutely love baking! From breads to cakes to cookies, you love any excuse to try a new recipe. When you learn your neighbor isn't feeling well, you don't hesitate to whip up some of your famous sugar cookies topped with the fancy icing. Not only will your neighbor be impressed with your creative cookie painting, but more importantly, they will also get to see you serving others like Jesus!

What if you have amazing handwriting? You've mastered the skill of cursive writing. When your mom signs up to host a baby shower for your aunt, you volunteer to address all the invitations! This allows your creative gift to bless others you love!

God has created you to do good things in unique ways. Whatever your creativity might look like, you can't go wrong by showing love to the people around you—just like Paul encouraged the Ephesians. In fact, part of the good we're created to do is share Jesus' love with others. When we understand Jesus' death and resurrection benefits everyone, we should willingly dream up creative ways to share Jesus' story with others!

Start thinking about this question:

SLIDE: Key Question

What are you good at? The best way to understand your purpose is by asking questions to those who know you best! As you grow closer to Jesus, you'll be able to creatively dream of ways to use your gifts to show God's love to the people around you! If you don't know the answer to this question, no worries.. But before we leave, let's pray together!"

SLIDE: Theme

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard.

OFFERING:

Our offering money has been going all the way to Kenya this summer! They have a food shortage, and our money will buy food baskets to bring to families who live in the Turkana community. If you have any offering, you can bring it up now while we watch this video of Turkana families receiving baskets.

Turkana video #2