

ALLEY Rundown – December 16 - 17, 2023

Today's Bible Story: Repeat the Sounding Joy (Jesus Is Born) • *Luke 2:1-7*

Today's Key Question: What makes your Christmas joyful?

Today's Bottom Line: You can have joy because God sent Jesus.

Monthly Memory Verse: *A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us. He will rule over us. And he will be called Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God. He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever and Prince Who Brings Peace.* *Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)*

SLIDE: Theme

What is going on, Alley? So good to be with you today as we continue to Countdown to Christmas. Today is all about JOY! When I think about joy, I think about music. And the holiday season has some of the best music out there! How many of you love Christmas songs? (Pause for responses.) How many of you—or your family members—have been listening to Christmas music since the start of November? (Pause for responses.) That's awesome! It's one thing to listen to Christmas songs, but how many of you love to SING Christmas songs? (Pause for responses.) Well, I have a game for YOU. I call it 'Christmas Carol Chaos.'

SLIDE: "Christmas Carol Chaos"

Who wants to play a game that will test your Christmas song skill?

Choose four volunteers to participate and introduce them to the rest of the group.

Alright, let's put you in two teams of two. Here is how it works. I'll give one person a Christmas song to sing. Their partner has 15 seconds to guess what the song is. I'll keep time. For every song you get right, you'll get a point. We'll trade teams and then trade who is singing every song. We'll play several rounds and then determine a winner!

Ready . . . set . . . OH! I forgot a pretty important rule. You can't actually SING the lyrics of the song. I will give you one word. You may sing that word over and over again to the tune of the song. Your partner will guess the name of the song based on you singing just that word. Make sense? Any questions? Great! Let's play!

Host can keep a 15-second timer on their phone or watch.

Song List with the single word they are allowed to sing to the song's melody:

- All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth (*dentist*)
- Angels We Have Heard on High (*halo*)
- Away in a Manger (*donkey*)
- Deck the Halls (*tinsel*)
- Frosty the Snowman (*snowball*)
- Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas (*yuletide*)
- Jingle Bells (*ding*)
- Joy to the World (*happy*)
- Oh Christmas Tree (*spruce*)
- Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (*nasal*)
- The Little Drummer Boy (*mallets*)
- We Wish You a Merry Christmas (*pudding*)

That was so much fun! But we can only have one 'Christmas Carol Chaos' Champion. The winning team is [Name of Team]! Let's give them a hand.

Christmas music is definitely a way to celebrate Jesus, God's greatest gift. As well as a great way to talk about our next countdown to Christmas word: JOY!

SLIDE: Joy

This makes me wonder. I know some people are crazy about Christmas music. How many of you have been listening to Christmas music for weeks now? (*Pause for responses.*) Has anyone been listening for a few months, maybe since October or November? (*Pause for responses.*) Wow! How about all year?! (*Pause for responses.*) I see those hands. That's amazing! I get it, though—some of those Christmas songs are just too good to listen to them only during the Christmas season.

Music this time of year has a way of putting a smile on our faces and making us feel happy. But let's be honest, sometimes life can be hard, especially at Christmas. And joyful music or not, we might not feel like getting up and dancing around.

This brings up a pretty big question: How can we still find a way to have joy even when we're not happy or life is difficult or we're just not in the Christmas spirit? Now, this isn't meant to be a downer, but it's important to remember that this season can be hard on some of us. Thankfully, finding joy—the sort of joy God can give us—isn't based on what we're going through. But that doesn't mean we won't still have questions and need some help to figure out how to find that joy.

If that's you, I'm glad you're here. We have an amazing story from the Bible to help answer our questions about joy. In fact, we can find all sorts of answers in the Bible to some of our biggest questions in life. Let's check it out...

VIDEO: So and So Show (11:27)

This was the first Christmas. This was how Jesus, God's one and only Son, came into the world . . . into the mess, to save us. There may be some pretty cool gifts you receive this month, and some of those will make you really happy! But make no mistake . . . THIS is how God gave us the GREATEST gift . . . and we can have joy because God sent Jesus. And even when we don't feel like celebrating . . . or dancing . . . even when life doesn't turn out the way we hoped . . . we can still have JOY because God sent Jesus!

And you know what? Now we get to be like God in how we share this great gift with others! Two thousand years ago, God GAVE the greatest gift. But now we have the opportunity in so many ways to show God's love and share with others. And remember, this isn't just something we do in December. Jesus matters throughout the entire year. God giving Jesus to rescue us matters in your classroom, on the soccer field or basketball court, in your home and with your friends. This is the GREATEST gift . . . and Jesus can bring you JOY all year long!

Today as you go to groups, think about this:

SLIDE: Key Question

What makes your Christmas joyful? How does knowing God gave us the greatest gift in Jesus give us joy? You might be having a hard time finding joy right now, even so, before you head out, let's pray and thank God for sending us Jesus, the greatest gift ever! Let's pray!"

SLIDE: Theme Background

Lead the group in a prayer related to what they just heard.

OFFERING:

If you have offering, you can bring it up now. Who remembers what we have been giving to? Yep! Food baskets in Turkana. This will be the last day we collect for Turkana. When we come back in January, we will start collecting for a brand-new mission which we will tell you about then. Thank you for being so generous, ALLEY kids!

SLIDE: WINTERPALOOZA

Don't forget...the Alley won't be open for the next two weekends, BUT... Our awesome Winterpalooza event will be the first week we are back in the New Year, January 6th and 7th! At every service we will have games, crafts, prizes and TONS OF FUN celebrating Winter and the New Year! Bring some friends back with you that weekend. Grab a postcard as you leave to remind your parents to bring you and your friends!