

## ALLEY Rundown – December 2-3, 2023

**Today's Bible Story:** Goodness and Light (Jesus Is Promised) • *Micah 5:2, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 7:14-15*

**Today's Key Question:** What are you hoping for?

**Today's Bottom Line:** You can have hope because God is faithful.

**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 (NirV)

**\*LG SUPPLIES NEEDED:** bag for each small group filled with green crepe paper, ornament post-its, garland, tape

### **SLIDE: Theme**

Hey, everyone! I am so pumped for another month here in the Alley! We're Decking the Halls and counting down to the big day! And what 'big day' is that, you might ask? Christmas, of course! Who is ready for Christmas break? I know I am! All month long, we're planning on making a big deal about this big day that celebrates Jesus, God's greatest gift! And to start, I need you to get in your small groups with your leader. *(give the kids time to get into their groups with a leader.)* We're going to play a game called, 'Deck the Trees!'

### **SLIDE: "Deck the Trees"**

Basically, you are going to turn your leader into a Christmas tree YES! This is going to be amazing! Here are some supplies for each small group.

*Give a bag of supplies to each small group: green crepe paper, ornament post-its, garland, tape.*

You'll have two minutes to decorate your Small Group Leader and turn them into a Christmas tree! Are you ready? Three . . . two . . . one...GO!

### **VIDEO: Two-minute countdown**

Wow! I'm so impressed! Look at this forest of beautiful Christmas trees. All right, leaders, you can undecorate yourselves and put the supplies back in the box.

Christmas, of course, is all about celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift! And as we celebrate Jesus this month, each week we'll take a closer look at a word that helps us countdown to the big day. The word for this week is . . .

### **SLIDE: Hope**

HOPE! So, to kick us off, I was wondering . . . what are some of the things we hope for? Take a moment and tell a few people next to you something you're REALLY hoping for right now.

Okay, let's hear from some of you. What are you really hoping for right now? We'd love to hear!

Okay those were great. I love how we heard about everything from grades in school to Christmas presents to people and pets who you'd like to feel better. As I think about hope, I'm hoping for . . .

It seems like we always have things we hope for, but especially at this time of year. For some reason Christmas is a time of year when the idea of hope really shows up.

Now . . . let me ask you a different question about hope. Raise your hand if you've ever had a time when you were hoping for something, but it was taking forever to happen. (*Pause for responses.*) Yeah, me too! And maybe all that waiting started to get to you and you started to get frustrated—can anyone relate to that? Raise your hand if that's you! (*Pause for responses.*) Yep, same here!

In all that frustration and waiting, what should we do? How do we cope? Where do we turn? Do we give up hope or find some sort of strength to keep waiting? After all, chances are pretty high that hope is even more important in times like those.

Those are really important questions for us to think about. Thankfully, we can find all sorts of hope in this book right here (*hold up the Bible*), the Bible! And in the Bible, we can find all sorts of truth to help us as we ask hard questions, and not just questions about hope, questions about . . . anything! Remember, the people who wrote the Bible had personal experiences with God. And God inspired them to write about those experiences so people like us could learn from them, thousands of years after they were first written! Let's check out our video and see what we can discover about hope!

#### **VIDEO: The So and So Show (14:13)**

Isn't it amazing to think that long before Jesus was ever born, God had this all planned out? God knew how Jesus would come into the world, and God knew exactly what we needed in a Rescuer. Now, I'm sure when Isaiah and Micah shared these words with God's people—who were definitely in a time of uncertainty—it was hard for them to see how God's plan would all happen. They might have even struggled to believe in a king Who would reign with fairness and justice forever and ever. After all, they had seen many kings do the exact opposite. But these words from God were meant to give hope. God had a plan . . . and He had not forgotten the people of Israel or Judah!

You know, if we go back to some of our questions, these prophecies can help us during times when we start to feel like all hope is lost. As we know, these prophecies came true. That's what so much of Christmas is all about. God promised to send a Rescuer, and God made good on that promise through Jesus, God's Son! At Christmas, and all through the year, we celebrate Jesus' birth, the true King, who will bring peace and justice forever and ever. That's a big promise, but God was and always will be faithful to carry out a plan like that! And that's a promise big enough to give us true hope!

#### **Slide: Memory Verse**

Our memory verse this month reminds us of that hope, "*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 (NirV)

Today as you go to groups, think about this:

**SLIDE: Key Question**

**What are you hoping for?** How does knowing God has a plan give us hope even when things are difficult? You may not quite know how to answer those questions. That's totally fine. You'll get a chance to chat all about hope while you're with your Small Group. Before you head out, let's pray and ask God to remind us of the true hope we have in Jesus! Let's pray!

**SLIDE: Theme**

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

**OFFERING:**

This is the last month for our offering to go to purchase food baskets for families in Kenya, in the rural town of Turkana. There is a food shortage and people don't have a lot of money to buy food.

**SLIDES: Kenya 1-4**

The food baskets we provide will be such a blessing to the children and families in Turkana. If you have any offering, you can bring it up now.

**SLIDE: WINTERPALOOZA**

I also want to tell you about an awesome event we will have the first weekend we are back in the New Year, January 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> called Winterpalooza! 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. We have postcards to give you as you leave so you can show your parents. You and your friends won't want to miss Winterpalooza!