

ALLEY Rundown – December 9-10, 2023

Today's Bible Story: Our King of Peace (Gabriel Appears to Mary) • *Luke 1:26-56*

Today's Key Question: What are your plans this Christmas?

Today's Bottom Line: You can have peace because God has a plan.

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: Paper plate and a pen for every kid

SLIDE: Theme

Hey, everybody! Great to see you all today as we deck the halls to discover more about Christmas and celebrate Jesus, God's greatest gift! The countdown to the big day is on! Christmas is fast approaching, and I've got a game to get us into the holiday spirit. Every year, we sing songs and learn how Jesus came to bring peace on earth. I thought it might be fun play a little game that gets us into that peaceful sort of holiday mood. I call it 'Peace on Plate!'

SLIDE: "Peace on Plate"

Peace on Plate is a game that will test your artistic abilities, and it's for everyone! But don't worry, we have a bit of a twist to make sure that even if you don't think you can draw very well, you can have fun and maybe even win! And it starts with a paper plate and a pen. Everyone can get one now.

Have volunteers pass out one paper plate and pen per kid.

Here's how it works: when I prompt you, everyone will place the plate on top of their head with the bottom of plate facing up and draw above their head without looking the entire time. (*Host can demonstrate.*) Then I'll give you a series of directions for you to follow. At NO POINT may you look at the plate until you are done—all the drawings need to be done with the plate on top of your head. Each of these drawings *SHOULD* end up looking like a peaceful Christmas scene. When you're done, we'll compare drawings and decide who has the most peaceful looking scene. Who's ready to play?!

Alright, let's see who can follow my instructions and draw a peaceful Christmas scene on their plate. Group up with your Small Groups. Plates on heads!

- First, draw a line for a floor.
- Second, draw a Christmas tree on the floor. Add decorations if you're feeling festive.
- Third, draw a star on top of your tree.
- Fourth, draw a fireplace with a mantel next to the tree.
- Fifth, draw a stocking hanging from the mantel of your fireplace. Maybe draw a cat or dog laying by the fire warming itself . . .
- Sixth, draw a present below the tree.
- Finally, draw a gift tag on the present and write the name of the person the present is for on the tag.

Okay pens down and . . . look at your masterpiece! Now show your work to the people around you and compare! Don't you feel more peaceful already?!

After a minute or two, have the leaders look around and each pick a winner. Invite the winners up to show their work.

SLIDE: Virtue

And as we celebrate Jesus, God's greatest gift, 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: PEACE

PEACE! Peace is an interesting word. Sometimes we talk about peace in how we get along with each other. We might think about peace as staying away from meaningless arguments and trying to have good relationships with the people around us. But there's another way to think about peace. Peace can also mean having or finding a general feeling of being content and choosing not to worry about what's happening around you.

We sing about peace in some of our Christmas carols and read about peace in the Christmas story, but have you ever noticed that this season can feel anything but peaceful? Seriously, Christmas can sometimes be the most chaotic time of the year! Let's see what they have to say on the So and So Show...

VIDEO: So and So Show (11:42)

I imagine when Mary was a young girl dreaming about how her life would go that she probably didn't imagine this. An angel? A baby? The very Son of God coming into the world through her? This probably felt anything but peaceful.

But for Mary, she came to the place where she was amazed by the fact that God would want to use her. She even had a 'why me' moment. 'Why me? Who am I that God would use ME?' I'm sure she wondered why God would want to use an ordinary girl from a small town to do something so extraordinary. Maybe she thought she was too young, too shy, too small, too . . . whatever. And yet, God used her in a big way . . . maybe the biggest way!

There are certainly times when we might have a plan for how our life should go and maybe even about what God should do to fit into that plan. And sometimes life takes unexpected turns, for sure. Life can become uncertain. The world can become chaotic. And when it does, it can become hard to find peace in the middle of it all. Thankfully, we can trust God no matter what. We can still trust and even celebrate that God has a plan! And maybe there is something big that God wants to do through you! It's easy to think like Mary, 'Why me? Who am I that God would use me?' But God can turn any situation into something amazing, AND God can use anyone to help make it happen—even you and me. And that can give us peace.

Here's something else to think about. What God was doing through Mary was also part of the plan for the whole world. The plan for a Rescuer. The plan for a Savior. The plan to bring ultimate peace through the PRINCE of peace! It probably wasn't easy for Mary, but God was with Mary the whole time and gave her the strength she needed to see it through.

Sometimes what God wants to do in us and through us can be uncomfortable. Sometimes it can be inconvenient. But if God is in it, we can have peace because God has a plan!

Today as you head to Small Groups, think about this:

SLIDE: Key Question

What are your plans this Christmas? That may sound like a simple question, but as we think about God having a plan to rescue the world, it's a question that can help us think about the ways God is in control. Like how does having the bigger picture of what God is doing in the world help us hold our own plans a little more loosely? What can we learn from Mary's story about how to think about our own plans? You may not be sure how you'd answer those questions, but that's totally fine.

Before you head to small groups, let's pray and ask for help to find the sort of peace that only God can give! Let's pray!"

SLIDE: Theme Background

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

OFFERING

We have one more week to donate our offering to families in Kenya. The food baskets you have provided so far have helped families in this rural area of Turkana.

Turkana video #1

Missions of Hope will get the food baskets to those who need them, and your offering is such a blessing. If you have any offering you can bring it up now.

Slide: theme

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 6th and 7th 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- and make sure they bring you and your friends back! Until then, see you next weekend!