

ALLEY Rundown – March 16-17, 2024

Today's Bible Story: Take You at Your Word (Palm Sunday) • *Matthew 21:1-11*

Today's Key Question: Why are promises important?

Today's Bottom Line: Jesus came to be our Savior.

Monthly Memory Verse: *God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.* John 3:16 (NIRV)

LG Supplies: Plastic easter eggs (enough for every two kids to have one)

SLIDE: Theme

Welcome to the Alley everybody! I don't know about you, but I'm really excited for this time of year. It's getting to be spring, winter and cold are moving into the rearview mirror, and in two weeks it's Easter! We're waiting until next week to really celebrate big because Jesus is alive!

We'll get into the whole story in just a minute. But first, it's time for some Easter fun! Today, I want to teach you a game called 'Head, Shoulders, Knees, Egg.' Everyone go ahead and choose a partner, and I'll give each pair an egg. If you need an egg, raise your hand.

Pause for the kids to partner up. Adult leaders should look for any kids who don't have a partner and play with them.

Pass out the plastic eggs, with one for each pair of kids.

Okay—you can face your partner and put the egg on the floor in between the two of you. If I call out 'head,' 'shoulders,' or 'knees,' you'll put both of your hands on your own head, shoulders, or knees. (*Demonstrate.*) But if I call out 'EGG,' then whoever grabs the egg first gets a point!

Let's play a few practice rounds to make sure we've all got the hang of it.

AUDIO: Fun instrumental music

Play four or five practice rounds where no one is eliminated. For each round, randomly call out "head," "shoulders," or "knees" . . . and then surprise everyone when you yell "EGG."

Make sure everyone knows before you start playing rounds that count—the person who doesn't get the egg is out.

(*After the first round that counts*) Okay, if you're holding the egg, you're still in. Hold your egg up high and look for someone else with an egg for this next round. Everyone else can move to the side of the room to watch.

Walk around and make sure the kids with eggs have found a new partner. As you do, take one of the two eggs from them so each pair only has one egg.

Play the game for several more rounds, ideally getting down to five to 10 kids who you can celebrate as the winners.

Collect all of the eggs before you continue.

Have you ever had to wait for something? Maybe something you were promised would happen, something fun, and you are bouncing in your seat, going completely insane just waiting?

Tell a personal story of something exciting you had to wait for. Maybe a family trip, a birthday, or results from trying out for a sport or a musical.

What about you? Have you ever had to wait on a promise?

Allow volunteers to share some of their experiences.

I get it. I've been there. But sometimes . . . the promise isn't what you thought it would be. Sometimes you've built it up in your head so much that when the thing you've been waiting for happens . . . it's kind of a letdown.

What does it feel like when something doesn't go the way you thought it should? Or worse when someone makes a promise . . . but then they bail on it? How do you react when the thing you've been hoping and waiting for turns out to be not what you built up in your head?

Those are great questions. And, as always, we've got an excerpt from this (*hold up Bible*) to help us out. The Bible is all about promises—and the God who knows how to keep them!

Check this out...

VIDEO: *The So and So Show* (13:10)

SLIDE: *Theme background*

There are a lot of times in life where we expect things to turn out one way and they end up being completely different. We get all of our hopes up just to find ourselves disappointed. Sometimes the reason is because our expectations were wrong in the first place. We're incredibly creative, and the stories we make up in our heads aren't always accurate.

Many people expected Jesus to be this conquering king that would come and destroy His enemies and free Israel. The crowds were really hyped up about this, as we saw with the help of our volunteers. But that is not what Jesus did. And many people were disappointed. They thought the promise had died.

These misguided expectations may have caused some to miss the even greater reason why Jesus came in the first place. Their expectations might've helped them miss the even greater promise and freedom that Jesus came to offer. Jesus came to be our Savior. Not a military savior, not a political savior, but the Savior of the world.

I don't know about you, but there are certainly times when I can get caught hoping God will do things one way, and all of my hope is built on that expectation. Answer my prayer a specific way. Deal with mean people a specific way. Bless me specifically like this. But God might not always respond the way we expect. In fact, He often doesn't!

But just like Jesus entering into Jerusalem the final week of his life, just because God doesn't do what you hope doesn't mean God isn't about to do something even greater. And it's important for us to look back at all the ways that God has kept promises in the past, because it will help us to trust God more with our own lives.

As you head to your Small Groups, think about this:

SLIDE: Key Question

Why are promises important? How have you seen God keep promises throughout the Bible? Why might that be important for us to think about today? Those might be tricky questions for you to answer. But don't worry, you'll have all sorts of time to chat about them with your Small Group. But before you head out, let's pray and ask God to help us be the kind of people that keep our promises as well! Let's pray!

SLIDE: Theme Background

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

OFFERING

We've been talking the ministry we are raising money for with our offering. Does anyone remember what it is? Yep...Morning Star Mission. It's a mission right here in Joliet, IL that helps people who are struggling financially. If you brought your offering, go ahead and put in in the container. Let's take a look at this video of a family of 6 who lost their home and needed help.

VIDEO: Family of 6 live in car

SLIDE: Theme

What a great mission to support. Morning Star changes lives! See what you can do this week to raise some money for this awesome mission.