

ALLEY Rundown- June 1- 2, 2024

Today's Bible Story: Lost and Found (The Story of the Lost Sheep) • Luke 15:1-7

Today's Key Question: What does joy mean to you?

Today's Bottom Line: We can have joy because of Jesus.

Monthly Memory Verse: *A cheerful heart makes you healthy. But a broken spirit dries you up.*
Proverbs 17:22 (NIV)

Supplies Needed: 3 blindfolds, 3 bags with 12 objects in each bag, Leader list of items

PRE-SERVICE VIDEO: Dude Perfect

SLIDE: Theme

Hi, everyone! Welcome to the ALLEY! First week of June, hopefully you're done with tests, done with school, and ready to get up, get out, and get going. Before we get started, I'd like to welcome our brand-new 4th graders to the ALLEY! Hey 5th graders, can you guys help me...what are some things we should make sure our fourth graders know about the Alley? (Give kids time to answer. They may need prompting but make sure they cover:

- *Where the bathroom is*
- *What they can do each week when they first come in*
- *Where they should sit*
- *EXPLAIN ALLEY CASH!*
- *Parent Discussion Guides...tell what happens when they return each week*
- *The So and So Show*
- *Where the offering goes*

Well, As the official start of summer quickly approaches, I realize there are plenty of gatherings, galas, and banquets to attend—each celebrating something awesome. BUT there won't be any shindig like the one the Alley is hosting for the next two months!

We are Starting the Party as we talk about JOY.

To start off with a bang, I'll need help with a game called 'Party Favors . . . FAST!' Anybody want to give me a hand?

SLIDE: "Party Favors . . . FAST!"

Choose three kids and line them up across the stage. Hand each of the volunteers a large bag full of random objects. Each bag will contain the same objects.

Everybody knows the best parties give out party favors! Even though you're celebrating someone else's birthday, sometimes everyone gets a gift bag filled with all kinds of fun stuff! As a young whippersnapper, I loved to show my younger siblings all the goodies I got for attending someone's party.

Take a good look in the bag, volunteers. Don't pull anything out, just take a peek.

In this game, we want you to show the audience some of the objects within your party favor bag. In our game, I will call out one object. You need to find the object, pull it out, and hold it up as quickly as you can! The last person to hold up the object will be eliminated from the game. Make sense? (Allow response) Great!

Oh! I almost forgot.

Hand each volunteer a blindfold.

Yep. You'll have to do it without seeing what you're grabbing. Get those blindfolds on, and let's play 'Party Favors . . . Fast!'

AUDIO: Upbeat Game Music

Use list of items

Play the game. Call out objects one at a time. After an object is called, eliminate the last person to pull out the correct object. If kids pull out the incorrect object, tell them to keep digging!

The last volunteer remaining in the game is crowned the winner.

And THAT is how it's done! Friends, I've never seen anyone rummage through their party favor bags as quickly as these volunteers. However, there is only one who can claim to have the fastest hands on this party scene!

It's good to see everybody—like *really* good. I experience more joy on days like today because I'm with you doing something I love. Plus, you're all so fun to be around. Thank you for being people in my life who put a smile on my face.

When you consider your life and all the people in it, who are the people who bring you joy? It could be a baby cousin who has the chubbiest cheeks in the Midwest; maybe it's a coach who knows exactly how to encourage you after a tough game. Or you may have a friend who is always a party waiting to happen. If you have someone who brings you joy and you're willing to share it with the group, raise your hand.

Ask a few to share about who gives them joy

Hearing all these names gives me a huge smile knowing these individuals mean so much to some of you.

I think we can all agree that life is better because we're surrounded by awesome people who encourage us, laugh with us, and are just plain fun to be around. We love playing on their teams, sitting in their classrooms, hanging out with them after school, or receiving their hugs after a long week. I want you to consider a question concerning all the people who put a smile on your face.

What happens when they aren't around? Like, what about those times when we're by ourselves, in a hard situation, or faced with a tough decision or circumstance and those people are nowhere to be found?

After all, we can't bring an entourage of joy-giving people with us everywhere we go! You might face seasons in life when your favorite people are hard to come by. What happens then?

Or what happens when your friends become a bit less friendly? What do you do then? Where do you go to find joy?

These are great questions that we get to explore today. Fortunately for us, the Bible spells out the source of our joy! The great news is joy can still be found even when our favorite people aren't around and we feel a little lost.

In the New Testament, the book of Luke was written by a doctor and historian coincidentally named . . . Luke. Luke shares all about the life and ministry of Jesus. Throughout Luke, we can read about how Jesus loved and cared for everyone—including those who were far from perfect.

Let's check it out...

VIDEO: The So and So Show (13:34)

I love this parable because it speaks of God's great love for all. Each one of us is like the lost sheep sometimes, right? When we believe we can take on life without God, we end up lost and in a hot mess. All of us are guilty of being separated from God because of sin. On our own, we can't fix this sin problem. We are like the helpless sheep without a shepherd.

Thankfully, there is hope for all of us found in this parable. God will look for you and won't stop until you're found! God will *be* with you and will *walk* with you through every hard thing to get back to the flock, back to the lush fields, and back to safety. God will do this regardless of your past, present, or future. There is no mess or trouble we can get into that's too big or awful for Jesus. His love for you is unconditional and never-ending.

How awesome is that? Thinking about this can help us find joy no matter what is happening in our lives.

Joy can be found in remembering and thanking Jesus for the times He rescued us and for the times He will rescue us again. For many in this room, you've already decided to follow Jesus for the rest of your life, and we think that is awesome! If you've never told Jesus you want to follow Him—that you want Jesus to be like your shepherd—and you want to talk with someone, let your Small Group Leader know today. We'd love to set aside some time to talk with you about what it looks like to be sought after and cared for by a fantastic shepherd, Jesus.

In the parable, Jesus pointed out that the neighbors and friends celebrated the return of the lost sheep. Likewise, we get to celebrate the ways God is at work in the world and in the lives of those around us! Joy can also be found when we see our friends and family are found by God's love and grace.

God's love for us is *huge*. Bigger than you can even imagine. When you pause to think about how great God's love is for us, you can't help but feel joy. This joy can be found even when we are not surrounded by those who give us a big smile. When all these folks are gone, joy is still possible because of God!

I think it's pretty amazing how God created us to live with joy—as we read in our Memory Verse for this month, Proverbs 17:22.

SLIDE: Memory Verse

A cheerful heart makes you healthy. But a broken spirit dries you up. (Proverbs 17:22, NIV)

As we wrap up, think about this one question:

SLIDE: Key Question

What does joy mean to you? Some might describe it as happiness, but it is so much more, isn't it? It's being able to celebrate all the incredible things God is doing in your life. Consider the question, and you'll have a chance to share your thoughts with your Small Groups. Before that, let's pray together to thank God for loving us and for seeking us out when we are lost."

SLIDE: Theme Background

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

OFFERING

What mission are we supporting this year? Yes, Morning Star Mission! Morning Star Helps People who are struggling financially. They help them with their basic necessities AND they help them with whatever it is they need to do, to be able to get in a better place and support their families. One of the things the kids need are supplies to help them succeed in school. One of the programs they have to help kids get the school supplies they need is called Jump on the Bus. If you have your offering, bring it up as we watch this video...

VIDEO: Jump on the Bus

So, let's help the kids be ready to jump on the bus this year! Missions of Hope prepares all year to be able to help kids in need start their school year off right. So, we have a few months before school starts again to give to Morning Star for these supplies – think about what you can do to raise some money for kids in need in our area.

SLIDE: Theme

CG: Summer JAM Slide

It's almost time for Summer Jam! It's coming up very soon and we're so excited to invite you to these 3 nights jam-packed with FUN and Adventure! You won't want to miss it. Tell whoever brought you that you need to visit the Summer Jam Tent after our time together today to sign up and get your t shirt!

****AT YOUR COORDINATOR'S DIRECTION, YOU WILL EITHER DISMISS TO SMALL GROUP OR DO ACTIVITIES TOGETHER.**