

ALLEY Rundown - November 30-December 1, 2024

Today's Bible Story: The Word (In the Beginning Was the Word) • *John 1:1-5, 14*

Today's Key Question: Why is Jesus important to you?

Today's Bottom Line: God always had a plan to send Jesus.

Monthly Memory Verse: “[Mary] is going to have a son. You must give him the name Jesus. That’s because he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21 (NIV)

PRE-SERVICE VIDEO: Dude Perfect

Welcome the students and introduce yourself to the group. Set expectations for behavior during the large group. Review “Alley Cash” and bathroom procedures. Invite students to bring up offering if they brought it.

SLIDE: Theme Slide

Merry Christmas, friends! Not only am I so excited to start another amazing month together here in the Alley, but I’m even MORE excited because it’s my favorite time of year—CHRISTMAS! How many of you love Christmas music? (Get response) Excellent. Now, how many of you have been listening to Christmas music since the beginning of November? (Get response) YES! I see my fellow Christmas-music fanatics.

Well, if you love Christmas music, you’ll LOVE this month as we dive into ‘Christmas Playlist: Let heaven and nature sing’ and celebrate all the amazing things about this time of year, especially Jesus’ birth and God’s plan to save the world.

The celebration starts with a competition to test how well you know your Christmas songs. We’ll call it ‘The Christmas Playlist Lyric Challenge.’

SLIDE: “The Christmas Playlist Lyric Challenge”

Here’s how it works. I’ll ask you a question about a potentially confusing Christmas song lyric along with three options on the screen. Then we’ll see how well you know the songs on your Christmas playlist. When I say so, hold up one finger if you think the answer is 1, two fingers if you think the answer is two, and three fingers if you think the answer is three. You can keep track of your own score. Pretty easy, right? I guess we’ll see. Here we go!

SLIDE: Question 1

- 1) A corncob pipe, a carrot nose, and button eyes
- 2) A corncob pipe, a button nose, and coal eyes
- 3) A wooden pipe, a button nose, and carrot eyes

Alright, time to vote . . . and the answer is . . .

SLIDE: Answer 1

Use the following questions for the remainder of the game following the same rhythm of question and answer with kids holding up the number they think is the correct answer.

SLIDE: Question 2

- 1) Toll the ancient Yuletide carol
- 2) Poll the ancient Yuletide carol
- 3) Troll the ancient Yuletide carol

SLIDE: Answer 2

SLIDE: Question 3

- 1) Figgy Pudding
- 2) Vanilla Pudding
- 3) Pudding is gross. Ice cream please!

SLIDE: Answer 3

SLIDE: Question 4

- 1) Great and wholesome ideas!
- 2) Black spiders
- 3) Electric eels

SLIDE: Answer 4

SLIDE: Question 5

- 1) One horse open sleigh
- 2) One horse, hope, and stay
- 3) One purse, rope, and clay

SLIDE: Answer 5

SLIDE: Question 6

- 1) Over the trains
- 2) Ole' refrains
- 3) O'er the plains

SLIDE: Answer 6

Review the correct answers with everyone.

SLIDE: Theme Background

Before we jump into our Bible passage for today, let's start with a little word play. I'll say a word, and I want a few volunteers to tell me what might cause someone to say that word. Maybe like what might they be doing, what might have just happened, or what might they be experiencing. Let's give it a try with an easier one. The first word is 'thanks.' What might have caused someone to say the word 'thanks'? Get creative!

Encourage responses. Maybe someone has just received a gift. Maybe someone gave someone a compliment. Maybe someone invited a friend over. Encourage creativity. Below are other examples or choose your own depending on your group.

Okay, how about the word . . . ‘amazing.’ What could have happened for someone to say ‘amazing’?

Encourage responses. Seeing a sunset/sunrise. Observing a flashy science experiment. Catching an incredible sports moment like a dunk or gymnastics routine.

Now, how about something that might be a little negative like this next word . . . ‘oops.’ Why might someone say that?

Encourage responses. Spilling something. Accidentally tripping someone or over something. Throwing out something that shouldn’t have been thrown out.

Those were great. How about this one: ‘stop!’ Why might someone have to say that one?

Encourage responses. Their dog is digging around in the trash. Their friend is about to step in something gross. Their sibling keeps singing the same song over and over.

Alright, one more. How about ‘nice’? Why would someone say ‘nice’?

Encourage responses. They passed a difficult test. Their friend won a contest. A friend performed well in the school musical.

THANKS, everyone! That was super NICE of you. You’re all so AMAZING! Okay, okay, I’ll STOP . . . OOPS, I did it again. (beat) But seriously, isn’t it amazing how many possible moments you came up with from just a few random words? I’m sure you’ve heard something like this before, but put simply, words have power. We use them to communicate information, explain our ideas, or express our emotions.

Often, we think about our words or the words people we know might use to speak with us. But have you ever thought about the way God uses words? Does God use words? How would we even know? It’s difficult to ‘hear’ from God, isn’t it? These are important questions—questions that, believe it or not, people have been wondering about for thousands of years. Thankfully, people did hear from God! And many of them wrote down what they heard and experienced in letters and writings that became part of the Bible we have today so we can learn how to trust God all these years later. Let’s jump in and see what we can discover about God.

VIDEO: The So and So Show (11:38)

John was one of Jesus’ closest friends. John had a first-hand view of so much because he was one of Jesus’ twelve disciples. He did life day-in and day-out with Jesus for three years. John saw miracles, heard amazing teachings, and got to experience the way Jesus spent time with all kinds of people. John wrote down much of what he saw and heard so WE could have the opportunity to learn about who Jesus truly is and come to believe that He is truly the Son of God! However, John chose to write the Christmas story just a little bit differently than his friends Matthew and Luke. Let’s dig into what he did.

The first words of the Bible are “In the beginning”. John starts his Gospel with “ In the beginning” - coincidence?

People who study the Bible think that John did this on purpose. This was John’s way of taking the readers back to THE beginning.

In Genesis we said that God created so many things just through the power of God's word—that God spoke and it happened? Well, here John was telling us that Jesus was there . . . He is the Word . . . and that all things were created through Him. All LIFE comes from Jesus. And in the same way that God separated the light and the dark, Jesus created life and LIGHT and DARKNESS can't overcome that light!

A few verses later, John goes on to share exactly how God beat the dark. He used that phrase he used earlier, the Word. Listen to this:

Open the Bible to John 1:14 (NIV) and read or work from the pre-written passage.

The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father. And the Word was full of grace and truth.

The Word—who was there 'in the beginning' became a HUMAN! God spoke the greatest Word yet by sending Jesus into this world as a HUMAN BEING. God made a home with us. The Light came to us to chase out the dark.

But even more than that, when we look at Jesus, at His love and compassion, we are seeing the way God speaks! God speaks with grace and truth. This is what God is like. We can have a relationship with God because of the life that Jesus brings!

It's easy to think that Christmas started with a Baby placed in a manger in Bethlehem, but John showed us that God had a plan from the very beginning to send Jesus. And NOTHING was able to stop that plan. No matter how dark the world was, the Light of the World would still come. No matter if people stopped listening, God would still speak the greatest Word yet. Because God had a plan to send Jesus, we can now know what God is like—we can KNOW God—and through Jesus we can spend FOREVER with God! It's AMAZING!

As you go to your groups today, think about this:

SLIDE: Key Question

Why is Jesus important to you? Chat with your group about how having a bigger understanding of God's plan in Jesus helps you appreciate what Jesus did for you even more. Maybe you're just learning about why we celebrate and sing songs and make playlists about how God sent Jesus at Christmas time. And that's okay, too! You're in the right place to ask all your questions. Your Small Group Leader would love to chat with you about all of that and more! Before you go, let's pray and thank God for sending the Light of the World into the darkness.

SLIDE: Theme Background

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.