

ALLEY Rundown – December 7- 8, 2024

Today's Bible Story: Send Me an Angel (An Angel Appears to Mary and Joseph) • Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18-25

Today's Key Question: What helps you remember that God is with you?

Today's Bottom Line: Celebrate because God is with you.

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 (NirV)

CAMPUS SUPPLIES: Gather supplies needed for Pictionary game below (2 easels with paper, markers, index cards with song titles as listed below)

PRE- SERVICE VIDEOS: *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.

What's up, friends?! We have such a great day in store for you . . . starting with a crazy game of Pictionary! Of course, this isn't just any old version of Pictionary—no. This is 'Pictionary: Christmas Playlist Edition.'

SLIDE: "Pictionary: Christmas Playlist Edition"

Think you know your Christmas songs and carols? Are you up for the challenge? Who wants to draw?!

Select two volunteers to get the game started, one for each side of the room.

(To Volunteers) "Each of you will be drawing for one side of the room. We'll try different artists for each round and see which side of the room can get the most points.

Split the room down the middle. Face the easels so they face the sides of the room.

Host shows them both the same song at the same time. They draw at the same time for their side of the room.

Use the following songs during the game. After each round, label the drawings with the song title.

Write the following song titles on index cards

*Frosty the Snowman
Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer
12 Days of Christmas
Angels We Have Heard on High
O Little Town of Bethlehem
Silent Night*

The season of Christmas can be full of the unexpected. Like. . . surprise visits from family. Homemade gifts from loved ones that mean so much. Or even some not-so-great unexpected events like a meal burning in the oven or the Christmas tree falling over in the middle of the night. Unexpected things will happen, and how we handle them can make all the difference. Take this for example.

Communicator shares a personal story of a time they received unexpected news that made a big difference or potentially even changed the course of their life. Use the following story as an example or use as a hypothetical situation.

When I was about your age, my life revolved around music. I loved playing piano and singing in the school chorus, and I dreamed that one day I'd maybe even play music professionally. I had the best teachers around, and I was excited for the future. Then one afternoon, my parents called me into the living room. They seemed super serious. They cut right to the chase. We were moving to another state because my dad got this amazing job opportunity. I was gutted. I'd have to leave my chorus friends and my piano teacher. I had a ton of questions about how this would all work out. How would I find another great piano teacher? Would I make the school chorus? Would my school even have a chorus I could join? Everything felt up in the air.

Thankfully, everything worked out. It wasn't easy to move to a whole new part of the country. But I did end up finding another piano teacher, joined the chorus, and had a TON of great opportunities to play music. I ended up meeting lots of new friends, some of whom I'm still friends with. I also met some amazing teachers who saw other skills and talents in me. And who I am today might be different than what I thought it would be, but it's way better than I could have ever imagined. Looking back, I had nothing to fear; God was with me and was working in my life the whole entire time.

When we feel like that, how can we remember that no matter how we feel about God, we can KNOW that God is ALWAYS with us? How can we trust God no matter what, even when the 'no matter what' feels pretty significant?

Wow, those are some big questions, aren't they? Thankfully, we have a great place to discover some answers. In the Bible we can find all sorts of people who experienced moments just like that. Okay, maybe they didn't have to find a new piano teacher or basketball coach, but many of them did have to move, start new jobs, and even receive some unexpected news that completely changed the course of their lives. We have them written down for us because God inspired people to capture their stories so others could learn how they can trust God with their situations. Let's head there now.

VIDEO: The So and So Show (18:38)

Mary was just an ordinary small-town girl, probably just a bit older than you. Nazareth was the small town where Mary lived, chances are that a lot of people would have known Mary. It can be hard to hide in a small town!

Mary was engaged to be married! And this ordinary girl in this small town was about to have to do something extraordinary. . . and quite a bit unexpected. Finding out this news from an Angel was probably scary. And the news she was getting wasn't fun either.

Side note, most people fell down in fear when angels appeared. Angels' first words are often, 'Do not be afraid!' Angels are powerful, and they can be terrifying!

But the angel reassured Mary that God would be with her through it all.

Just as Mary had an angel visitor to reassure her and give her peace that God was with her, Joseph also got a visit from an Angel, but this happened in his dreams.

Joseph was reassured that God was WITH him! The angel told him to name the baby Jesus, but He would also be called Immanuel . . . **God With Us!** When Joseph woke up, he trusted what the angel said and took Mary as his wife.

For both Mary and Joseph, it certainly must have been hard for them to believe that God was with them when their world seemed like it was turning upside down. Surely this was not what either of them had planned! There were certainly moments of fear and uncertainty. This moment did not end in fear or anxiety. This very moment was the beginning of God sending JOY to the world. Hope to the world. Peace to the world!

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 trust that God is good and God will be with us through it all.

SLIDE: Key Question

What helps you remember that God is with you? Think about times when you have been tempted to believe that God has been absent. Think about how instead you were able to see God's presence and remember that God is with you. You might have trouble thinking about a specific moment, and that's okay. You'll have a chance to chat about this with your group. They might be able to help you see how God was with you even when it was tricky to see that God was there. Now, before you head to groups, let's pray and thank God for Jesus who always reminds us that God is with us!

SLIDE: Theme Background

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