

ALLEY Rundown- January 4 - 5, 2025

Today's Bible Story: Rainy Days and Mondays (Jesus Wept) • *John 11:1-45*

Today's Key Question: Who can you talk to when you're sad?

Today's Bottom Line: When you're sad, remember you're not alone.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Be strong, all you who put your hope in the LORD. Never give up.* Psalm 31:24 (NIRV)

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.

SLIDE: Theme Slide

What's going on, friends? I am so excited to start another amazing month—another YEAR—together here in The Alley. I am SO happy to be back together with you all. I love that we can start the year off with joy! You know it's interesting . . . playing a game with friends can bring you joy. Seeing a fuzzy, little kitten can make you feel warm and cozy. Tasting sour milk can make you feel queasy and disgusted. We experience things all the time that make us feel a certain way.

I know, let's start our time off with a bit of discussion! Here's the question: Have you ever listened to a song or watched a movie, and it made you feel amazing? Like a song that made you feel totally hyped up and ready to take on the world. Who can share a moment when that happened.

Those were great examples. Now, let's think about the flip side. Have you ever listened to a song or watched a movie, and you were caught off guard by a really sad or emotional part? Anyone want to share one?

They were great examples. Thanks for sharing about those moments! It's amazing how much power that music and movies have on our emotions."

Now, let's be honest for a second. Truth be told, it's one thing to feel sad because you watched a movie or listened to a song. But what happens when it's something in our actual real life that makes us feel sad? What happens when we experience moments when we feel like it's the end of the world and start to lose hope? I know that might be hard to think about. Some of us in this room have been through some pretty rough times, and it's okay to feel sad. And when we feel sad, we might not know the best way to handle it. We may even wonder how we can trust God throughout the situation.

If you've felt like that, let me tell you, you're not alone. And having hard questions is only natural. Thankfully, when we have big, even scary, questions, we have a great place to start: the Bible. Remember, the Bible was written by all sorts of people who experienced God's power throughout their lives. God helped them throughout some tricky situations, ones that made them feel all sorts of feelings. In fact, we'll see today that Jesus Himself felt some big emotions when it came to feeling sad. How about we head there now?

VIDEO: *The So and So Show* (16:11)

This story is obviously pretty incredible. Whenever I think about this moment from Jesus' life, I always come back to the moment when Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death" but then later in the story Lazarus had actually died. This all seems quite confusing sometimes. It was certainly confusing for His friends Mary and Martha who were honest with Jesus—they told Him things would have been different if He had been there.

And I come back to that moment because there are times when life can be like this, right? We find ourselves feeling down and out because of a situation we're in and maybe we don't understand what God is doing. We might even wonder if God is doing anything at all.

Jesus KNEW that He was going to raise Lazarus. But He was still sad! Grief and sadness are real, and Jesus felt those emotions right along with us. This is such a great reminder that no matter how you're feeling, you can trust God no matter what. You can know that Jesus is right there with you in your emotions, even the really hard ones. And because of this, God can help you choose something that we call resilience . . . that means getting back up when something gets you down.

Invite Jesus to be with you in what you're feeling. Ask Him to help you through and to give you the courage to get back up . . . even though you may still feel sad or lonely. It's also a good idea to find a trusted adult to talk to about what you're feeling. You'll start to see that no matter what you feel, you're never alone. Jesus experienced all the sad and hard emotions that we do. He's right there with you. He's got you.

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

SLIDE: Key Question

Who can you talk to when you're sad? Think about where you go when you feel like you've been knocked down. Who helps you get back up? Who helps you see how you can trust God throughout your situation? Before you go, let's pray and thank God for being with us when we're sad. It's awesome to know that God really knows what we're going through. Let's pray.

SLIDE: Theme Background

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

2024 OFFERING RECAP

We started raising money for an organization called Hope Mobility last year. We started in June at Summer Jam and kept collecting our offering for them each weekend until the end of 2024. Do you remember what we were raising money for? Yep! Wheelchairs for kids in Africa!

Well wait until you hear how much we collected in those 6 months! Between all of the City and Alley kids at all three of our Parkview campuses we raised 21,966.04!!! This means that 80 kids can receive a brand new wheelchair. Take a look at what your money has done.

SLIDE: Kids in wheelchair

Give yourself a round of applause right now. YOUR money is what made these kids new wheelchairs! I am so proud of you. And God is so happy that you were so generous. Next week is Winterpalooza, but the week after that we are going to introduce the next mission that we will be raising money for so make sure you are here to hear about it!

SLIDE: Winterpalooza

Speaking of Winterpalooza... It's next weekend!!! At all services next Saturday and Sunday (or Sunday for HG) we will be having a Winter Party! We will have games, crafts, prizes and giveaways! Bring lots of friends with you because we are going to have a blast. Grab a postcard on your way out and grab some extras to give to your friends!