

# Alley Rundown - April 12-13, 2025 (Easter Lesson)

**Today's Bible Story:** Hope is Alive (Crucifixion and Resurrection) • *John 18–20:1-18; 1 Peter 1:3*

**Today's Key Question:** Why does Easter give us hope?

**Today's Bottom Line:** Whatever happens, remember Jesus is alive.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *"In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world."* John 16:33b (NIRV)

**LG SUPPLIES:** 2 nets, 2 small containers, 2 packages of peeps (12 peeps for each team)

**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.*

Hello! Hello! What's happening, my PEEPS! (beat) . . . Easter puns never get old. But marshmallow Peeps sure do! Anyway, Happy Easter, everyone! Jesus is risen! And today, we get to spend our time celebrating that together! And it all starts with a wild relay I like to call 'The Big Picture's Marshmallow Mania Relay.'

**SLIDE:** "The Big Picture's Marshmallow Mania Relay"

Who wants to play? I need six volunteers!

*Divide the volunteers into two teams of three. Two partners will stand across the front of the room from each other. One partner will have a package of peeps. The other will have a small container. The third volunteer should stand in the middle of the opposing pair with a net.*

Alright, here's how to play. Contestants on this side will chuck a peep, one at a time to your partner, who will then stuff it in the container. But, if the Peep falls, you can't pick it off the ground. You must catch it in the air! Now, while you're trying to throw peeps, one of your opposing teammates will be standing between you trying to catch them with their net. If they catch one, they can deliver it to their partner to put in the container. Hint, this would be a good time to throw while they are defenseless. At the end of two minutes, we'll see who has the most peeps smushed into their container. Got it? Any questions? Great! Let's go!

**Audio:** *Upbeat Easter music* 5 minute countdown

(After the game) "Well that was a smashing success! You all did great!"

I'm so excited to be with all of you today as we celebrate what is literally the best day in all of history—the day we celebrate that Jesus is alive! People celebrate today in all sorts of ways . . . some paint Easter eggs and host Easter egg hunts, some families have big family dinners, and others keep it low-key and spend the day at church or take time to serve others in need. Then there are all the ways Easter is celebrated throughout the world!

Like did you know how they celebrate in Florence, Italy?

**Slide:** "Explosion of the Cart"

At Easter time, they fill a wooden cart with fireworks and light it for a spectacular tradition. It's literally called 'Explosion of the Cart.'

Throughout Spain, they host parades and processions.

### **Slide: Spanish Easter Processionals**

People parade throughout the streets carrying banners and floats commemorating the events of the first Easter. They last all week from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday!

Or how about in the Philippines?

### **Slide: The Salubong Tradition**

This is an event that happens at dawn where people portray the events of Easter morning when Jesus met Mary in the Garden. They can be quite ornate and dramatic.

It's awesome to know that as we celebrate Easter together, that people all over the world are celebrating, too. Jesus is alive, and that is definitely something worth celebrating!

So, I want to know . . . how are YOU celebrating Easter?

*Have a few kids share about their Easter plans. The Communicator should also share how they are celebrating Easter as well.*

It is such a big day, right?"

I love learning about the ways people practice following Jesus and celebrating big events of His life like Christmas and Easter. But sometimes as I'm pulling out the same decorations year after year and participating in the same traditions, I start to wonder. Is there ever a danger that celebrating these holidays year after year can feel . . . I don't know . . . boring or maybe even meaningless? Don't get me wrong, Easter is AWESOME. Jesus literally rose from the dead! We should celebrate that *at least* once a year! But . . . ANOTHER Easter egg hunt . . . ANOTHER Easter basket . . . ANOTHER Easter dress. I just wonder, how can we be sure to remember just how important Easter is?

Maybe you've wondered something similar. Maybe you're new to this whole Jesus thing and you wonder why people at church make such a big deal about all of this. Maybe you just love all of it no matter how you're celebrating Easter. But at one point or another, you might start to wonder about why we celebrate like we do. You might wonder if it's that much of a big deal. And when you start to have questions like that, it's important to find an adult you trust and ask those questions.

Remember, it's never wrong to ask hard questions . . . especially at Easter time. In fact, there was so much happening during that final week of Jesus' life — I imagine that it was pretty difficult for many of His closest friends and followers, the disciples, to really understand what was going on at the time. Thankfully, we get a glimpse into the moments throughout the first four books of the New Testament, the Gospels. And they can help us remember why Easter is such a big deal. Let's check in with the So and So Guys to get their thoughts.

### **The So and So Show 12:53**

You know, for those who were there in the crowd that day when Jesus was sentenced to death, many wouldn't have thought twice about the way that He was dying. You see, Jesus wasn't the first person to die on a cross. It was the Roman government's way of dealing with rebels and criminals—people who they saw as a threat to the peace of the mighty Roman Empire. And, if you remember, in the story, there were even two criminals next to Jesus. For many in the crowd that day, Jesus was just a guy who got Himself caught up in something bad, and this was Rome's way of dealing with Him.

But we know it's not as simple as that. The truth is at any time Jesus could have stopped what was happening. At any moment, Jesus could have called down an army of angels to defend Himself. He could have proven His innocence.

So why didn't He?

Because nobody was taking His life. He was giving it up. Jesus said these very words earlier in His life: *'Nobody takes [my life] from me . . . I give it up myself' (John 10:18, NIV)*. But Jesus also said that after He laid His life down, He would take it back up again, referring to His resurrection.

You see, Jesus wasn't a criminal who got caught on the wrong side of a rebel plot. He wasn't a liar who finally got trapped in His own lie. He was the Son of God who came to lay down His life for you and for me, to rescue us so that we could have a relationship with God that lasts forever. He is our true and LIVING hope (*pointing to the puzzle board*) and our true freedom! And . . . because Jesus rose again to new life, WE can now have new life by believing and trusting in Him. He is alive!

And no matter how you choose to celebrate, it's ALWAYS worth celebrating. Not only on Easter, but every single day we're given!

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

**SLIDE: Key Question**

**“Why does Easter give us hope?** Think about why our hope is alive because Jesus is alive! This might be a tricky question for you to answer for yourself. But don't worry, you'll have a chance to talk all about this and ask any questions you might have with your Small Group Leader. Before you go, let's pray and be thankful for God's great love that sent Jesus for us. God loves us so much, and Easter is the ultimate reminder of that. Let's pray.”

**SLIDE: Theme Background**

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

**CHECK THE TIME: There should be 20-25 minutes for small group. If LG is running late, skip the next part.**

#### **OFFERING:**

We are collecting our offering to support a mission partner called La Liberte' Church (La Lib-er-tay) in Africa. La Liberte' Church is in a financially challenged area in The Congo. The kids at the church don't have access to a lot of food so this church feeds 700 children a meal every weekend! Each meal costs \$2.00 and our goal is to help feed as many kids as we can!

Check out this video....

**VIDEO: Offering Video**

**SLIDE: Theme**