

## ALLEY Rundown – January 3<sup>rd</sup>- 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Bible Story:** Jesus at the Temple • *Luke 2:41-52*

**Conversion Starter:** Who can you talk to about God?

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come.* • 1 Timothy 4:8 NlrV

### SLIDE: Theme

Happy New Year, everybody! Welcome back, we made it to 2026! I'm so pumped you're here today, because this month we're starting a brand-new theme called Game Plan: Growing Stronger in Faith Every Day.

Here's the idea: just like athletes and teams need a game plan to train, grow, and win, we've got a game plan that helps us grow stronger every day in our faith. And we're going to see what that looks like all month long!

This month, we're going to look at four parts of a game plan to help you get to know God better—talking about God, praying to God, hearing from God, and living for God. Today we're going to look at the first part of that game plan! Talking about God!

The more you try something, the more you know what to do. And today we'll see how Jesus, even when He was your age, made time to talk about God. That's our Bottom Line for today: **Practice talking about God.**

So here's why our theme is called Game Plan. Athletes train their bodies, but God invites us to train our hearts. The Bible says that training to be godly helps us *now* and *forever*—that's a Game Plan worth following. When we worship, listen, and talk about God, we're building real strength on the inside. This month's Memory Verse, that's the verse we're going to try to get into our hearts and heads, is 1 Timothy 4:8!

### SLIDE: Memory Verse

Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come. • 1 Timothy 4:8 NlrV

Okay, I've got a question for you all. Have you ever thought about what it means to practice?

We usually think of practicing for something like a sport, an instrument, or a game. You practice to get stronger, faster, or better at something. But there's something else we can practice that doesn't usually happen at practice or rehearsal. It's talking about God.

That might sound easy, but when you actually try it, it can feel a little awkward. You might wonder, 'What do I even say?' or 'What if I get it wrong?'

This month, we're learning that getting closer to God doesn't just happen automatically. Some things happen quickly, but other things take practice, just like anything else we care about.

There are all kinds of ways we can practice getting to know God better: talking about Him, praying to God, hearing from God, and living for God. This week, we're starting with the first one—talking about God, because as we'll find out, the more we do it, the more we learn about Him.

In our story, we'll see Jesus as a Kid, just 12 years old, right in the middle of grown-up conversations about faith. He didn't stay quiet or nervous. He showed what strength looks like at your age: showing up, listening well, asking questions, and daring to talk about God. He was with people who knew about God, and He talked to them about Him.

That's the kind of practice we're talking about. But before we dive into our true story from the Bible, let me tell you about something amazing we're doing this year! We're going through the key stories of the Bible from cover to cover!

We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can learn about God! (*Gesture to slide.*)

**SLIDE: God's Big Story**

Let's continue on in our journey through the Bible.

**VIDEO: Bible Story** (9:55)

Let's talk about the word *practice* in a way that makes sense for us.

**SLIDE: "Practice Means"**

Practice means:

- You do it again and again so you get better.
- You show up on purpose, even when you don't feel like it.
- You learn from mistakes, then try again.
- You take small steps and celebrate small wins.
- You keep going when it is boring or hard.

Jesus set the example for us. He was a young Kid in the temple talking about God. He didn't wait until He was older. He just did it.

So what can you start doing to talk about God?

Here is a very easy step: Practice. The best way to get better at something is to practice.

There are people in your life who know about God. Talk to them. Ask them your questions about Him. Ask them where you can find some answers in the Bible. You'll find that the people in your life who are His friends can help you get to know Him more too.

We watched 12-year-old Jesus in the temple. He showed up, listened, asked, and spoke about God. He didn't wait until He was older. This week, picture one real moment in your life where you can do the same. As you think about a moment, ask yourself this:

### ***SLIDE: Conversation Starter***

#### **Who can you talk to about God?**

Carry this question to Small Group. You can practice talking about God with someone you know who knows about Him. It might be awkward to talk about God at first, but it can help you get to know Him better!

Let's take a moment and talk to God right now. Would you bow your head and close your eyes?

God, thank You for Jesus. Thank You that even as a Kid, Jesus showed us how important it is to talk about You. Help us to practice this week. Help us to find the people in our lives who know You so we can learn more about You. We want to know You more. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

### **WINTERPALOOZA**

#### ***Slides: Winterpalooza***

Make sure you tell your parents you need to come back next week! Next weekend at all services we will be WinterPalooza! This is our winter party where we will have crafts, games, prizes and SLUSHIES! So bring your friends next week!

### **OFFERING**

We started supporting an organization with our offering last year. Who remembers what that organization was? Right! Shady Oaks Camp! We have been helping kids and adults with disabilities who live right near us in Homer Glen, IL. Their mission is to give these kids and adults a summer camp experience just like the ones kids without disabilities can enjoy.

#### ***SLIDES: Shady Oaks 5-8***

Well, we have been supporting them with our offering for 6 months and I'm proud to say that we have raised **\$1,663.83** from the weekend offerings in the city and alley at our 3 campuses! Way to go!!!

We will start supporting a new ministry this month so come back to see what that will be!