

Alley Rundown - November 11 & 12, 2017

Bible Story: Sour Grapes (Parable of the Vineyard Workers) • *Matthew 20:1-15*

Key Question: What do you do when you don't feel grateful?

Bottom Line: Adjust your attitude.

Memory Verse: "Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus." *1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV*

NOTE: Students will watch a re-cap video of their Alley After Hours event in place of the Worship Experience this weekend.

CONNECT TIME: Blurry Photos Game (Activity at the Start of Service)

Supplies Needed: Dry-Erase Boards, Candy for Prizes

"Now, I have a feeling that some of you were not so eager to drag yourselves out of bed this morning. In the spirit of getting all those neurons firing, let's play a brain game!"

Leader divides group into 2-4 teams, and hands out one dry erase board to each team leader.

"Here's how it'll go down: I have one dry erase board for each of you. When we start the game, I'll flash an unfocused, blurry picture up on the screen. Your job is to guess what the picture is supposed to be, but you'd better think fast, 'cause you'll have only fifteen seconds to write an answer on the board! After fifteen seconds, each team will hold up their board. I'll keep track of how many correct answers you receive. The team with the most correct answers at the end of five rounds is the winner! Any questions? *(Allow response)* Great! I'll give you one hint before we get the ball rolling: all images are somehow related to Thanksgiving. All right, let's get this show on the road."

As the images come up on screen and teams guess each image, you can improv humorous dialogue with off-the-wall guesses. Help build suspense if the teams have similar scores. If necessary, make the last image worth more points to get a winner.

"Let's see the first image."

CG: Blurry Turkey Image

"What do you think? It's a little out of focus, but take your best guess. You've got 15 seconds! GO!"

Host allows 15 seconds to pass. Groups take turns holding up their signs.

“Great job guessing, everybody. We had guesses all over the place! The blurry image is a turkey not a *[Name of most outlandish guess]*. Although it’s a little more rare than I’d prefer.”

CG: Turkey Image

Host continues game in similar fashion with the following images.

CG: Blurry Cranberry Sauce

CG: Cranberry Sauce

CG: Blurry Cornucopia

CG: Cornucopia

CG: Blurry Giblet Gravy

CG: Giblet Gravy

CG: Blurry Great Aunt Ethel

CG: Great Aunt Ethel

“Threw you for a loop with that last one, huh? Great Aunt Ethel is as much a part of Thanksgiving as touch football or giblet gravy!”

Host gives credit on the last photo to any guess that implies older lady.

NOTE: Hand out an equal amount of candy to all teams, regardless of the score. Hopefully the students will notice that this is unfair, and some may call you on it. This is okay, and will lead into the lesson...

“How’s about a big round of applause for our winning team and for the rest of the teams!?”

(Transition)

Has something unfair ever happened to you? Maybe it wasn’t sports or a game, and the prizes you get, but I’m sure all of you have felt like you didn’t get something you deserved at one point or another and you just thought the whole situation wasn’t fair at all! It’s natural! It’s part of the human experience! It is never fun to feel like something isn’t fair.”

“This whole feeling is something that Jesus used in one of the stories He told. When Jesus wanted his followers to understand something about God, He often put it into a story called a parable to make it easier for them to understand. One of these parables is recorded for us in Matthew 20:1-15. Jesus talks about a man who owned a huge vineyard. I like to imagine rows and rows of grapevines overloaded with plump fruit. Let’s take a look at it, in this week’s episode...”

CG: Week 1 Lesson Video (Runtime: 11:54)

“In Jesus’ parable of the vineyard workers, the workers who were hired first were angry. They weren’t angry because they didn’t get what they were promised . . . because they did receive the correct payment. They were bitter over the fact that the owner of the vineyard paid everyone else the exact same even though they didn’t work as long! In a way, they felt like someone else was getting treated better than they were.”

“Now, when you first heard this story, it can be hard to wrap your head around it! The mistake the vineyard workers made and the mistake all of us are guilty of is this problem: we try to be the judge of what we deserve and what we don’t deserve, like I thought I deserved to start those basketball games. But this goes beyond ourselves, doesn’t it? We tend to become the judge of what other people deserve and don’t deserve. We think we know what’s fair. And instead of refocusing and looking at all the amazing good things that God has done for us, we tend to look at what other people have.

“Part of what Jesus is saying is we need to be grateful for what we’ve been given, whether it’s a gift, a position on a team, or money for a job. And no matter what we receive, we can always trust in God to provide us with exactly what we need when we need it.”

“We’ll talk a little more about this today in your small groups . . . but before we head to Small Groups, let’s watch this awesome slideshow of our Alley After Hours event from Friday! While you’re watching, some of you can bust into that delicious prize candy you got from earlier. Enjoy the fruits of your labor.”

CG: Alley After Hours 2017 Slideshow

“As you head to your groups, ask yourself this question . . .”

CG: What do you do when you don’t feel grateful?

“What do you do when you don’t feel grateful? How can you respond when you face a situation like the ones we talked about today? I bet you’ll come up with some great ideas! Let’s pray.”

(PRAY AND DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS)