

Alley Rundown - September 21-22, 2019

Bible Story: Under Pressure (Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams) • *Genesis 41*

Bottom Line: When the pressure is on, you can trust God is with you.

Key Question: What do you need to trust God with right now?

Memory Verse: Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding...
(Proverbs 3:5 NIV)

CONNECT TIME: Caesar Cipher

Supplies Needed: Pens and Paper (1 per Small Group)

What to Do:

- Divide group up into Small Groups with a Small Group Leader
- Give each student and Small Group Leader a pen and a piece of paper

"Great to see you all. Let's get started with a message that we'll need later. Ready for it? Here you go!"

CG: Scrambled Bible Truth Slide

"Got it? Pretty clear, right? Not exactly. Looks like we need some help. Does anyone know what a cipher is?"

Pause for responses.

"That's right! You know your stuff! A cipher is a tool that is used to unscramble a code. Let me show you an example. This is called a Caesar Cipher."

CG: Caesar Cipher

"There is an outer ring and an inner ring. Both move. Now, all you need is the key number. The key number tells you how many spaces the inner circle moved to the right. This will now reveal to you your new code. In this case, the key number is 3!"

CG: Caesar Cipher slide #2 (inner circle one move right)

CG: Caesar Cipher slide #3 (inner circle another move right)

CG: Caesar Cipher slide #4 (inner circle another move right to final position)

"That's it! You can now unscramble the message! Just find the letter from the scrambled message on the *outer circle* and you will now know what letter it is supposed to be by looking at the *inner circle*! Small Groups, let's see who can unscramble it first! Go!"

Groups race to unscramble the message using the cipher on the screen. The first group to unscramble the message, write it on their paper, and bring it forward wins.

"We have it! The message unscrambled says . . ."

CG: Unscrambled Bible Truth Slide

"Seven years of plenty turns equal years of empty. Hmmm . . . that doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Let's hope that it'll make more sense as we continue."

Begin Rundown...

"I noticed something while you were working to unscramble the message. Some of the groups worked really well under pressure! Is everyone like that normally? I don't know about you, but sometimes when things get a bit stressful, it is easy to start getting stressed out. When the pressure is on, it's like we can become different people. We freak out. We get frustrated at people. We think the world is going to fall apart! Anybody else feel that way sometimes? Yeah . . . me too! I wonder why that is. And I wonder, how we can figure out a better way to react when the pressure's on?"

"When we have questions like that, a great place to start is the Bible. For the past few weeks, we've been learning more about a guy named what? *(Pause for response)* Right, Joseph! Last week when we left Joseph, he was in prison in Egypt. Joseph ended up in Egypt when his jealous brothers had originally sold him into slavery. He was falsely accused of doing something wrong and was thrown in prison. But God was with Joseph and gave him success while he was stuck in prison. He was even able to interpret dreams for two of Pharaoh's men. All Joseph asked was that the cupbearer would remember him and tell somebody about his innocence. But sadly the cupbearer forgot about Joseph, so he was stuck, alone in prison."

"Now, I have forgotten things before—where I put my car keys, to put the recycling out, even a birthday from time to time—but usually it doesn't take me too long for me to remember. The cupbearer, however, forgot about his promise to Joseph for the next TWO YEARS!"

"Check this out. *(Read directly from Genesis 41:1)* 'When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream. In his dream, he was standing by the Nile River.'"

Before we go any further, let's talk about dreams for a second. Throughout the Bible, we find people who have dreams like this. These weren't like the dreams we have at night, but these were more like visions or a way for a message to get communicated. The problem is that the message wasn't always clear. It often took somebody else to interpret or help give meaning to the message. Trying to figure out the messages could be very frustrating—like watching you all try to figure out the message from before."

"OK, back to our story. Pharaoh has a dream—a vision—where he's standing by the Nile River."

"(Read directly from Genesis 41:2-4) 'Seven cows came up out of the river. They looked healthy and fat. They were eating some of the tall grass growing along the river. After them, seven other cows came up out of the Nile. They looked ugly and skinny. They were standing beside the other cows on the riverbank. The ugly, skinny cows ate up the seven cows that looked healthy and fat. Then Pharaoh woke up.'"

"Kind of a strange dream, right? So these seven scrawny cows eat up these seven healthy cows. Then Pharaoh wakes up . . . probably hungry for a burger I imagine. But then he falls asleep and has another dream, similar to the first."

"(Read directly from Genesis 41:5-7) 'He fell asleep again and had a second dream. In that dream, seven heads of grain were growing on one stem. They were healthy and good. After them, seven other heads of grain came up. They were thin and dried up by the east wind. The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads.'"

"Then Pharaoh woke up again. Strange dreams, huh? Pharaoh thought so too. In fact, when he woke up in the morning, he was really bothered. He called in all of his top wise men and interpreters in all of Egypt. None of them, however, could figure out what the two dreams meant."

CG: SEVEN YEARS OF PLENTY TURNS EQUAL YEARS OF EMPTY

"It definitely seems like our unscrambled message has something to do with what we just saw in Pharaoh's dream, right? We'll stop right there and let this week's episode pick up the rest. Watch this!"

CG: Lesson Video (Runtime: 12:30)

“My guess is that most of us will not find ourselves standing before an all-powerful king expected to interpret strange cow dreams with the fate of an entire nation hanging in the balance. But I do think we find ourselves in times of pressure when it might be hard for us to remember that God is with us. Even Jesus faced incredible pressure as he stood before powerful leaders on trial in the last days of his life. And later on, his disciples faced incredible pressure as they shared the message of Jesus all throughout the known world.”

“The pressure we experience may not be the same, but that doesn’t mean we don’t face pressures. Maybe we need to stand up for a friend who is being picked on and we know the results could go badly, but we know it is the right thing to do. Or maybe we have to be honest with someone about something that we REALLY would just like to pretend we didn’t see and look the other way. These are pretty high-pressure moments. But when the pressure is on, we can trust that God is with us, no matter how it turns out in the end.”

“Is there something you have been avoiding just because it seems too difficult? Today as you go to groups, I want you to think about this question:”

CG: Key Question Slide

“What do you need to trust God with right now? We will all face situations that seem impossible, moments when the pressure is on and we’re not sure if we have what it takes to do what’s right. Thankfully we can trust God no matter what. As you think about those situations where you need to trust God, think about who you can talk to about them—maybe even your Small Group Leader! Before you all head to groups, let’s take a moment to thank God that we can trust Him in every situation!”

Lead group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, lead offering time then dismiss kids to Small Group.

OFFERING TIME:

Homer Glen: Victor

New Lenox: Daniel

Orland Park: Michael and Valerie

CG: Picture of Child

“Offering Time is important here in the Alley, because it gives you all an opportunity to worship God by giving your money generously. Here at *(your campus)*, we give our offering to help support *(your campus child)* in Kenya. Our offering goes to show kindness to them by buying clothes, and food, and other materials they may need. We have a few friends of Parkview that are in Kenya right now, where *(campus child)* lives! If you brought an offering today, you may place it in our Alley Offering Bin *(point children to location of bin)*

CG: Alley Offering Bin JPEG

...when the video plays. If not, that’s ok too. You can bring an offering next week. The Bible tells us this about bringing our offerings to Him...”

CG: Offering Verse JPEG (Acts 20:35)

(Invite students to place their offerings in bin)

NOTE: No Worship Experience this weekend due to Connect Time.

Dismiss to Small Groups.